THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

AMONG those writers who have distinguished themselves in the polite literature of the present day, the late Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH well deserves a place, both from the number and elegance of her publications. She was the eldest daughter of Nicholas Turner, esq. a gentleman of fortune, who possessed estates in Surry and Sussex; a man, it is said, of an improved mind and brilliant conversation. She lost her mother when very young, and was brought up under the care of an aunt, whose ideas of female education were less favourable to mental accomplishments than those of her father. She received, therefore, rather a fashionable than a literary education, and she was left to gratify her taste for books by desultory reading, and almost by stealth. Her genius, indeed, early showed itself in a propensity to poetry; but she was introduced while very young to the gaieties and dissipation of London, and, becoming a wi[fe before] she was sixteen, was plunged into th[e] married life before her fine geniu[s] all the advantages it might have g[...] ture more regular and persevering

Her husband, Mr. Smith, was the younger son of a rich West-India merchant, and associated with him in the business. The marriage had been brought about by parents, and did not prove a happy one; it had probably been hastened on her side by the dread of a mother-in-law, as her father was on the point of marrying a second wife. The married pair lived at first in London, in the busy part of the town, but soon after took a house at Southgate. The husband had little application to business; and probably, of the young couple, neither party had much notion of economy. The management of the concern was soon resigned to the father of Mr. Smith, who purchased for them an estate in Hampshire, called Lys Farm. Here Mrs. Smith found her tastes for rural scenery and for elegant society gratified; but building and expensive improvements, joined to an increasing family, soon brought them into difficulties, which were not lessened by the death of her husband's grandfather, to whom Mr. Smith acted as executor, in the discharge of which office a litigation arose with the other branches of the family, which plunged them into lawsuits for life. The vexation attending these perplexities, together with the pecuniary embarrassments she was continually involved in, clouded the serenity of Mrs. Smith's mind, and gave to her writings that bitter and querulous tone of complaint which is discernible in so many of them.

Possessed of a fine imagination, an ear and a taste for harmony, an elegant and correct style, the natural bent of Mrs. Smith's genius seems

to have been more to poetry than to any other walk of literature. Her *Sonnets*, which was the first publication she gave to the world, were universally admired. That species of verse, which in this country may be reckoned rather an exotic, had at that time been but little cultivated. For plaintive, tender, and polished sentiment the Sonnet forms a proper vehicle, and Mrs. Smith's success fixed at once her reputation as a poet of no mean class. They were published while her husband was in the King's Bench, where she attended him with laudable assiduity, and exerted herself to further his liberation; her feelings upon which event she thus describes in a letter to a friend: "For more than a month I had shared the restraint of my husband amidst scenes of misery, of vice, and even of terror. Two attempts had, since my last residence among them, been made by the prisoners to procure their liberation by blowing up the walls of the house. Throughout the night appointed for this enterprise I remained dressed, watching at the window. After such scenes and such apprehensions, how deliciously soothing to my wearied spirits was the soft pure air of the summer's morning, breathing over the dewy grass, as, having slept one night upon the road, we passed over the heaths of Surry!"

Their difficulties, however, were far from being terminated; and the increasing derangement of Mr. Smith's affairs soon afterwards obliged them to leave England; and they were settled some time in a large gloomy chateau in Normandy, where Mrs. Smith gave birth to her

youngest child. Here also she translated *Manon l'Escaut*, a novel of the Abbé Prevôt, a work of affecting pathos, though exceptionable with regard to its moral tendency.

Returning to England, they occupied for some time an ancient mansion belonging to the Mills' family, at Woodlading, in Sussex, where Mrs. Smith wrote several of her poems.

An entire separation afterwards taking place between her and her husband, she removed with most of her children to a small cottage near Chichester, where she wrote her novel of *Emmeline* in the course of a few months. She afterwards resided in various places, mostly on the coast of Sussex; for she was particularly fond of the neighbourhood of the sea. The frequent changes of scene which, either from necessity or inclination, she experienced, were no doubt favourable to that descriptive talent which forms a striking feature of her genius. Her frequent removals may be traced in her poems and other works. The name of the Arun is consecrated in poetry, and is often mentioned by her:

"Farewell, Aruna! on whose varied shore
My early vows were paid to Nature's shrine,
And whose lorn stream has heard me since deplore
Too many sorrows. . . . ."

In another sonnet she addresses the South Downs:

"Ah, hills beloved! where once, a happy child,
Your beechen shades, your turf, your flowers among,
I wove your blue-bells into garlands wild,
And woke your echoes with my artless song:

Ah, hills beloved! your turf, your flowers remain:
But can they peace to this sad breast restore,
For one poor moment soothe the sense of pain,
And teach a breaking heart to throb no more?"

Poets are apt to complain, and often take a pleasure in it; yet they should remember that the pleasure of their readers is only derived from the elegance and harmony with which they do it. The reader is a selfish being, and seeks only his own gratification. But for the language of complaint in plain prose, or the exasperations of personal resentment, he has seldom much sympathy. It is certain, however, that the life of this lady was a very chequered one.

Mrs. Smith had a family of twelve children, six only of whom survived her. Her third son lost a limb in the service of his country, and afterwards fell a sacrifice to the yellow fever at Barbadoes, whither he had gone to look after the family property. The severest stroke she met with was the loss of a favourite daughter, who died at Bath, where Mrs. Smith also was for the recovery of her health. The young lady had been married to the Chevalier de Faville, a French emigrant. Her mother is said never entirely to have recovered from this affliction.

Her last removal was to Stoke, a village in Surry, endeared to her by her having spent there many years of her childhood; and there she died, Oct. 28th, 1806, in her 57th year, after a tedious and painful illness. She was a widow at the time of her death, and, being in possession of her own fortune, had a prospect of greater ease in her pecuniary circumstances than she

had for some time enjoyed. Her youngest son, who was advancing in the military career, fell a victim to the pestiferous climate of Surinam before her death; but the news had not reached her.

Though she was worn by illness, the powers of her mind retained their full vigour, and her last volume of poems, entitled *Beachy Head*, was in the press at the time of her decease; an elegant work, which no ways discredits her former performances.

She was the author of several publications for children and young people, which are executed with great taste and elegance, and communicate, in a pleasing way, much knowledge of botany and natural history, of which two studies she was very fond. That entitled *Conversations* is interspersed with beautiful little descriptive poems on natural objects.

Mrs. Smith is most known to readers in general by her novels; yet they seem to have been less the spontaneous offspring of her mind than her poems. She herself represents them as being written to supply money for those emergencies which, from the perplexed state of her affairs, she was often thrown into; but, though not of the first order, they hold a respectable rank among that class of publications. They are written in a style correct and elegant; they show a knowledge of life, and of genteel life; and there is much beauty in the descriptive scenery, which Mrs. Smith was one of the first to introduce. Descriptions, of whatever beauty, are but little attended to in a novel of high interest, particu-

larly if introduced, as they often are, during a period of anxious suspense for the hero or heroine; but are very properly placed, at judicious intervals, in compositions of which variety rather than deep pathos, and elegance rather than strength, are the characteristics.

The two most finished novels of Mrs. Smith are *Emmeline* and *Celestina*. In the first she is supposed to have drawn her own character (with what degree of impartiality others must judge) in that of Mrs. Stafford.

Celestina is not inferior to *Emmeline* in the conduct of the piece, and possesses still more beauties of description. The romantic scenes in the south of France are rich and picturesque. The story of Jesse and her lover is interesting, as well as that of Jaquelina.

The *Old Manor-House* is said to be the most popular of the author's productions. The best drawn character in it is that of a wealthy old lady who keeps all her relations in constant dependence, and will not be persuaded to name her heir. This was written during the war with America; and the author takes occasion, as also in many other of her publications, to show the strain of her politics.

She also wrote *Desmond*, *The Wanderings of Warwick*, *Montalbert*, and many others, to the number of thirty-eight volumes. They all show a knowledge of life, and facility of execution, without having any very strong features, or particularly aiming to illustrate any moral truth. The situations and the scenery are often

romantic; the characters and the conversations are from common life.

Her later publications would have been more pleasing, if the author in the exertions of fancy could have forgotten herself; but the asperity of invective and the querulousness of complaint, too frequently cloud the happier exertions of her imagination.

Another publication of this lady's ought to have been mentioned, *The Romance of real Life*, a very entertaining work, consisting of a selection of remarkable trials from the *Causes Célèbres*. The title, though a happy and a just one, had the inconvenience of misleading many readers, who really thought it a novel. Their mistake was pardonable; for few novels present incidents so wonderful as are to be found in these surprising stories, which rest upon the sanction of judicial records.

THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

In an old Manor House in one of the most southern counties of England, resided some few years since the last of a family that had for a long series of years possessed it. Mrs. Rayland was the only survivor of the three co-heiresses of Sir Hildebrand Rayland; one of the first of those to whom the title of Baronet had been granted by James the First. The name had been before of great antiquity in the county—and the last baronet having only daughters to share his extensive possessions, these ladies had been educated with such very high ideas of their own importance, that they could never be prevailed upon to lessen, by sharing it with any of those numerous suitors who for the first forty or fifty years of their lives surrounded them; and Mrs. Barbara the eldest, and Mrs. Catharine the youngest, died single—one at the age of seventy, and the other at that of sixty-eight; by which events the second, Mrs. Grace, saw herself at the advanced age of sixty-nine sole inheritor of the fortunes of her house, without any near relation, or indeed any relation at all whom she chose to consider as entitled to possess it after her death.

About four miles from the ancient and splendid seat she inhabited, dwelt the only person, who could claim any affinity with the Rayland family; this was a gentleman of the name of Somerive;

who was considered by the people of the country as heir at law, as he was the grandson of one of the sisters of Sir Hildebrand; but Mrs. Rayland herself, whose opinion was more material, since it was all at her own disposal, did not by any means seem to entertain the same idea.

The venerable lady, and her two sisters, had never beheld this their relation with the eyes of friendly interest; nor had they ever extended towards him that generous favour which they had so much the power to afford, and which could not have failed to prove very acceptable; since he had married early in life, and had a family of two sons and four daughters to support on the produce of an estate, which, though he farmed it himself, did not bring in a clear five hundred pounds a year.

Various reasons, or rather prejudices, had concurred to occasion this coolness on the part of the ladies towards their cousin.—Their aunt, who had married his ancestor, had, as they had always been taught, degraded herself extremely, by giving herself to a man who was a mere yeoman.—The son of this union had however been received and acknowledged as the cousin of the illustrious heiresses of the house of Rayland; but following most plebeian-like the unaspiring inclination of his own family, he had fallen in love with a young woman who lived with them as companion; when it was believed that, as he was a remarkably handsome man, he might have lifted his eyes with impunity to one of the ladies, his cousins: this occasioned an estrangement of many years, and had never been forgiven.—The recollection of it returned with acrimonious violence, when the son of this imprudent man imitated his father, five-and-twenty years afterwards, and married a woman who had nothing to recommend her but beauty, simplicity, and goodness.

However, notwithstanding the repeated causes of complaint which this luckless family of Somerive had given to the austere and opulent inhabitants of Rayland Hall, the elder lady had on her death-bed recollected, that though debased by the alloy of unworthy alliances, they carried in their veins a portion of that blood which had circulated in those of the august personage Sir Orlando de Rayland her grandfather; and she therefore recommended Mr. Somerive and his family, but particularly his youngest son (who was named, by reluctantly obtained permission, after Sir Orlando), to the consideration of her sisters, and even gave to Mr. Somerive himself a legacy of five hundred pounds; a gift which her sisters took so much amiss (though they possessed between them a yearly income of near twice five thousand) that it had nearly rendered her injunction abortive; and they treated the whole family for some time afterwards with the greatest coolness, and even rudeness; as if to convince them, that though Mrs. Rayland had thus acknowledged their relationship, it gave them no claim whatever on the future kindness of her surviving sisters.

For some years afterwards the dinners, to which in great form the whole family were invited twice a year, were entirely omitted, and none of them admitted to the honour of visiting at the Hall, but Orlando, then a child of nine or ten years old; and even his introduction was principally owing to the favour of an old lady, the widow of a clergyman, who was among the ancient friends of the family, that still enjoyed the privilege of being regularly sent for in the old family coach, once a year; a custom which, originating in the days of Sir Hildebrand, was still retained.

This lady was a woman of sense and benevolence,

and had often attempted to do kind offices to the Somerive family with their rich maiden relations; but the height of her success amounted to no more than obtaining a renewal of the very little notice that had ever been taken of them, after those capricious fits of coldness which sometimes happened; and once, some time after the death of the elder Mrs. Rayland, bringing Orlando to the Hall in her hand (whom she had met by chance fishing in a stream that ran through their domain), not without being chidden for encouraging an idle child to catch minnows, or for leading him all dirty and wet into their parlour, at a time when the best embroidered chairs, done by the hands of dame Gertrude Rayland, were actually unpapered, and uncovered for the reception of company.

There was indeed in the figure, face, and manner of the infant Orlando, something so irresistible, that if Mesdames Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megara had seen him, they would probably have been softened in his favour—And this something, had always so pleaded for him with the three equally formidable ladies his relations, that notwithstanding the opposition of their favourite maid, who was in person and feature well worthy to make the fourth in such a group, and the tales of their old and confidential butler, who did not admire the introduction of any competitor whatever, Orlando had always been in some degree of favour—even when his father, mother, and sisters were shut out, and his elder brother entirely disclaimed as a wild and incorrigible boy, who had been caught in the fact of hunting divers cats, and shooting one of their guinea hens—Orlando, though not at all less wild than his brother, and too artless to conceal his vivacity, was still endured—A new half-crown from each of the ladies was presented to him on every

return to school, together with abundance of excellent advice; and if any one observed that he was a remarkably handsome boy, the ladies never contradicted it; though, when the same observation was made as to the rest of the family, it was declared to be most absurd, and utterly unfounded in truth.—To the beauty indeed of any female the ladies of Rayland Hall had a particular objection, but that of the Miss Somerives was above all obnoxious to them—Nor could they ever forget the error the grandfather of these children had committed in marrying for her beauty the young woman, whose poverty having reduced her to be their humble companion, they had considered as an inferior being, and had treated with supercilious insolence and contempt—To those therefore to whom her unlucky beauty was transmitted, they bore irreconcileable enmity, even in the second generation; and had any one been artful enough to have suggested that Orlando was like his grandmother, it would probably have occasioned the loss even of the slight share of favour he possessed.

When Orlando was about twelve years old, the younger of the three antique heiresses died: she left not however even a small legacy to the Somerive family, but gave every thing she possessed to her surviving sister. Yet even by this lady, though the coldest and most unsociable tempered of the three, Orlando was not entirely forgotten—she left him the bible she always used in her closet, and ten pounds to buy mourning; the other members of his family were not even named.

One only of the Mrs. Raylands now remained; a woman who, except regularly keeping up the payment of the annual alms, which had by her ancestors been given once a year to the poor of her parish, was never known to have done a vo-

luntary kindness to any human being: and though she sometimes gave away money, it was never without making the wretched petitioner pay most dearly for it, by many a bitter humiliation—never, but when it was surely known, and her great goodness, her liberal donation to such and such people, were certainly related with exaggeration, at the two market-towns within four or five miles of her house.

With a very large income, and a great annual saving, her expenses were regulated exactly by the customs of her family.——She lived, generally alone, at the Old Hall, which had not received the slightest alteration, either in its environs or its furniture, since it was embellished for the marriage of her father Sir Hildebrand, in 1698.

Twice a year, when courts were held for the manors, there were tenants' feasts—and twice there was a grand dinner, to which none were admitted but a neighbouring nobleman, and the two or three titled people who resided within ten miles.——Twice too in the course of the year the family of Somerive were invited in form; but Mrs. Rayland generally took the same opportunity of asking the clergy of the surrounding country with their wives and daughters, the attorneys and apothecaries of the adjoining towns with theirs, as if to convince the Somerives that they were to expect no distinction on account of the kindred they claimed to the house of Rayland.——And indeed it was on these occasions that Mrs. Rayland seemed to take peculiar pleasure in mortifying Mrs. Somerive and her daughters, who dreaded these dinner days as those of the greatest penance; and who at Christmas, one of the periods of these formal dinners, have blest more than once the propitious snow; through which that important and magisterial personage,

the body coachman of Mrs. Rayland, did not choose to venture himself, or the six sleek animals of which he was sole governor; for on these occasions it was the established rule to send for the family, with the same solemnity and the same parade that had been used ever since the first sullen and reluctant reconciliation between Sir Hildebrand and his sister; when she dared to deviate from the fastidious arrogance of her family, and to marry a man who farmed his own estate—and who, though long settled as a very respectable land-owner, had not yet written 'Armiger' after his name.

But when the snow fell not, and the ways were passable; or when in summer no excuse was left, and the rheumatism of the elder, or the colds of the younger ladies could not be pleaded; the females of the family of Somerive were compelled to endure, in all their terrific and tedious forms, the grand dinners at the Hall. And though on these occasions the mother and the daughters endeavoured, by the simplicity of their dress, and the humility of their manners, to disarm the haughty dislike which Mrs. Rayland never took any pains to conceal, they never could obtain from her even as much common civility as she deigned to bestow on the ladies who were not connected with her; and Mr. Somerive had often been so much hurt by her supercilious behaviour towards his wife and daughters, that he had frequently resolved they should never again be exposed to endure it. But these resolutions his wife, hateful as the ceremony was to her, always contrived to prevail upon him to give up, rather than incur the hazard of injuring her family by an unpardonable offence against a capricious and ill-natured old woman, who, however oddly she behaved, was still by many people believed to intend giving all her fortune to those who had undoubt-

edly the best claim to it; others indeed thought, with more appearance of probability, that she would endow an hospital, or divide it among public charities.

When the young Orlando was at home, and accompanied his family in these visits, the austere visage of Mrs. Rayland was alone seen to relax into a smile—and as he grew older, this partiality was observed evidently to increase, insomuch that the neighbours observed, that whatever aversion the old lady had to feminine beauty, she did not detest that which nature had very liberally bestowed on Orlando.—He was seventeen, and was not only one of the finest looking lads in that country, but had long since obtained all the knowledge he could acquire at a neighbouring grammar school; from whence his father now took him, and began to consider of plans for his future life.—The eldest son, who would, as the father fondly hoped, succeed to the Rayland estate, he had sent to Oxford, where he had been indulged in his natural turn to expense; and his father had suffered him to live rather suitably to what he expected than to what he was sure of.—In this Mr. Somerive had acted extremely wrong; but it was from motives so natural, that his error was rather lamented than blamed. An error however, and of the most dangerous tendency, he had now discovered it to be; young Somerive had violent passions, and an understanding very ill suited to their management.—He had early in life seized with avidity the idea, which servants and tenants were ready enough to communicate, that he must have the Rayland estate; and had very thoughtlessly expressed this to those who failed not to repeat it to their present mistress, tenacious of her power, and jealous of every attempt to encroach on her property.—He had besides trespassed on

some remote corners of her manors; and her gamekeeper had represented him as a terrible depredator among her partridges, pheasants, and hares. These offences, added to the cat-chaces, and tying canisters to the tails of certain dogs, of which he had been convicted in the early part of his life, had made so deep an impression against him, that now, whenever he was at home, the family were never asked; and insensibly, from calling now and then to inquire after her while Mrs. Rayland lay ill of a violent fit of the gout, Orlando had been admitted to drink his tea at the Hall; then to dine there; and at last, as winter came on with stormy evenings and bad roads, he had been allowed to sleep in a little tapestry room, next to the old library at the end of the north wing—a division of the house so remote from that inhabited by the female part (or indeed by any part) of the family, that it could give no ideas of indecorum even to the iron prudery of Mrs. Rayland herself.

Though Orlando was of a temper which made it impossible for him to practise any of those arts by which the regard of such a woman could be secured; and though the degree of favour he had obtained was long rather a misery than a pleasure to him; his brother beheld the progress he made with jealousy and anger, and began to hate Orlando for having gained advantages of which he openly avowed his disdain and contempt.—As his expenses, which his father could no longer support, had by this time obliged him to quit the university, he was now almost always at home; and his sneering reproaches, as well as his wild and unguarded conversation, rendered that home every day less pleasant to Orlando—while the quiet asylum he had obtained at the Hall, in a room adjoining to that where a great collection of books

were never disturbed in their long slumber by any human being but himself, endeared to him the gloomy abode of the Sybil, and reconciled him to the penance he was still obliged to undergo; for he was now become passionately fond of reading, and thought the use of such a library cheaply earned by acting as a sort of chaplain, reading the psalms and lessons every day, and the service in very bad weather; with a sermon on Sunday evening. And he even gradually forgot his murmurings at being imprisoned on Sundays and on Fridays in the great old long-bottomed coach, while it was dragged in a most solemn pace either to the next parish church, which was indeed at but a short distance from the mansion, or to that of a neighbouring town, whither, on some propitious and sunny days of summer, the old lady loved to proceed in state, and to display to her rustic or more enlightened neighbours a specimen of the magnificence of the last century. But as history must conceal no part of the truth, from partiality to the hero it celebrates, it must not be denied that the young Orlando had, though insensibly and almost unknown to himself, another motive for submitting with a good grace to pass much of his time in a way, for which, thinking as he thought, the prospect of even boundless wealth could have made him no compensation.—To explain this, it may be necessary to describe the persons who from his ninth year, when he became first so much distinguished by Mrs. Rayland, till his eighteenth, composed the household, of which he, during that period, occasionally made a part.

CHAPTER II.

THE confidential servant, or rather companion and *femme de charge* of Mrs. Rayland, was a woman of nearly her own age, of the name of Lennard.—This person, who was as well as her mistress a spinster, had been well educated, and was the daughter of a merchant who lost the fruits of a long course of industry in the fatal year 1720. He died of a broken heart, leaving his two daughters, who had been taught to expect high affluence, to the mercy of the world. Mrs. Rayland, whose pride was gratified in having about her the victim of unsuccessful trade, for which she had always a most profound contempt, received Mrs. Lennard as her own servant. She was however so much superior to her mistress in understanding, that she soon governed her entirely; and while the mean pliability of her spirit made her submit to all the contemptuous and unworthy treatment, which the paltry pride of Mrs. Rayland had pleasure in inflicting, she secretly triumphed in the consciousness of superior abilities, and knew that she was in fact the mistress of the supercilious being whose wages she received.

Every year she became more and more necessary to Mrs. Rayland, who, after the death of both her sisters, made her not only governess of her house, but her companion. Her business was, to sit with her in her apartment when she had no company; to read the newspaper; to make tea; to let in and out the favourite dogs (the task of combing and washing them was transferred to a deputy); to collect and report at due seasons intelligence of all that happened in the neighbouring families; to give regular returns of the behaviour of all the servants, except the old butler and the old coachman, who

had each a jurisdiction of their own; to take especial care that the footmen and helpers behaved respectfully to the maids (who were all chosen by herself, and exhibited such a group, as secured, better than her utmost vigilance, this decorous behaviour from the male part of the family); to keep the keys; to keep her mistress in good humour with herself, and as much as possible at a distance from the rest of the world, above all, from that part of it who might interfere with her present and future views; which certainly were to make herself amends for the former injustice of fortune, by securing to her own use a considerable portion of the great wealth possessed by Mrs. Rayland.

Of the accomplishment of this she might well entertain a reasonable hope; for she was some few years younger than her mistress (though she artfully added to her age, whenever she had occasion to speak of it), and was besides of a much better constitution, possessing one of those frames where a good deal of bone and no flesh seem to defy the gripe of disease. The sister of this Mrs. Lennard had experienced a very different destiny-- She had been taken at the time of her father's misfortunes into the family of a nobleman; she had married the chaplain, and retired with him on a small living, where she died in a few years, leaving several children; among others a daughter, to whom report imputed uncommon beauty, and scandal a too intimate connexion with the noble patron of her father. Certain it is, that on his marriage, he gave her a sum of money, and she became the wife of a young attorney, who was a kind of steward, by whom she had three children; of which none survived their parents, but a little girl born after her father's death, and whose birth occasioned that of her mother. To this little orphan, her great aunt

Mrs. Lennard, who with all her starched prudery had a considerable share of odd romantic whim in her composition, had given the dramatic and uncommon name of Monimia—Such at least was the history given in Mrs. Rayland's family of an infant girl, which at about four years old had been by the permission of her patroness taken, as it was said, from nurse, at a distant part of the county, and received by Mrs. Lennard at Rayland Hall; where she at first never appeared before the lady but by accident, but was the inhabitant of the housekeeper's room, and under the immediate care of the still-room maid, who was a person much devoted to Mrs. Lennard.

Mrs. Rayland had an aversion to children, and had consented to the admission of this into her house, on no other condition, but that she should never hear it cry, or ever have any trouble about it.—Her companion easily engaged for that; as Rayland Hall was so large, that *les enfans trouvés* at Paris might have been the inhabitants of one of its wings, without alarming a colony of ancient virgins at the other. The little Monimia, though she was described as having been

"The child of misery, baptiz'd in tears." LANGHORN.

was not particularly disposed to disturb, by infantine expressions of distress, the chaste and silent solitudes of the Hall; for though her little fair countenance had at times something of a melancholy cast, there was more of sweetness than of sorrow in it; and if she ever shed tears, they were so mingled with smiles, that she might have sat to the painter of the Seasons for the representative of infant April. Her beauty however was not likely to recommend her to the favour of her aunt's affluent patroness; but as to recommend her was the design of Mrs. Lennard, she saw that a beauty

of four or five years old would be much less obnoxious than one of fifteen, or even nine or ten; and therefore she contrived to introduce her by degrees; that when she grew older, her charms, by being long seen, might lose their power to offend.

She contrived that Mrs. Rayland might first see the little orphan as by chance; then she sent her in, when she knew her mistress was in good humour, with a basket of fruit, an early pine, some preserves in brandy, or something or other which was acceptable to her lady's palate; and on these occasions Monimia acquitted herself to a miracle; and presented her little offering, and made her little curtsey, with so much innocent grace, that Hecate in the midst of her rites might have suspended her incantations to have admired her. At six years old she had so much won upon the heart of Mrs. Rayland, that she became a frequent guest in the parlour, and saved her aunt the trouble of opening the door for Bella, and Pompey, and Julie. From the tenderness of her nature she became an admirable nurse for the frequent litters of kittens, with which two favourite cats continually increased the family of her protectress; and the numerous daily applications from robins and sparrows under the windows, were never so well attended to as since Monimia was entrusted with the care of answering their demands.

But her name—Monimia—was an incessant occasion of reproach—Why, said Mrs. Rayland, why would you, Lennard, give the child such a name? As the girl will have nothing, why put such romantic notions in her head, as may perhaps prevent her getting her bread honestly?—Monimia!—I protest I don't love even to repeat the name; it puts me so in mind of a very hateful play, which I remember shocked me so when I was a mere girl, that

I have always detested the name. Monimia!—'tis so very unlike a Christian's name, that, if the child is much about me, I must insist upon having her called Mary.

To this Mrs. Lennard of course consented, excusing herself for the romantic impropriety of which her lady accused her, by saying, that she understood Monimia signified an orphan, a person left alone and deserted; and therefore had given it to a child who was an orphan from her birth—but that, as it was displeasing, she should at least never be called so. The little girl then was Mary in the parlour; but among the servants, and with the people around the house, she was still Monimia.

Among those who fondly adhered to her original name was Orlando; who, when he first became a frequent visitor as a school-boy at the Hall, stole often into the still-room to play with the little girl, who was three years younger than himself—and insensibly grew as fond of her as of one of his sisters. Mrs. Lennard always checked this innocent mirth; and when she found it impossible wholly to prevent two children who were in the same house from playing with each other, she took every possible precaution to prevent her lady's ever seeing them together; and threatened the severest punishment to the little Monimia, if she at any time even spoke to Master Somerive, when in the presence of Mrs. Rayland.——But nothing could be so irksome to a healthy and lively child of nine or ten years old, as the sort of confinement to which Monimia was condemned in consequence of her admission to the parlour; where she was hardly ever suffered to speak, but sat at a distant window, where, whether it was winter or summer, she was to remain no otherwise distinguished from a statue than by being employed in making the household linen, and some-

times in spinning it with a little wheel which Mrs. Rayland, who piqued herself upon following the notable maxims of her mother, had bought for her, and at which she kept her closely employed when there was no other work to do.—When any company came, then and then only she was dismissed; but this happened very rarely; and many many hours poor Monimia vainly prayed for the sight of a coach or chaise at the end of the long avenue, which was to her the blessed signal of transient liberty.

Her dress, the expense of which Mrs. Rayland very graciously took upon herself, was such as indicated to all who saw her, at once the charity and prudence of her patroness, who repeatedly told her visitors, that she had taken the orphan niece of her old servant Lennard, not with any view of making her a gentlewoman, but to bring her up to get her bread honestly; and therefore she had directed her to be dressed, not in gauzes and flounces, like the flirting girls she saw so tawdry at church, but in a plain stuff; not flaring without a cap, which she thought monstrously indecent for a female at any age, but in a plain cap, and a clean white apron, that she might never be encouraged to vanity by any kind of finery that did not become her situation.—Monimia, though dressed like a parish girl, or in a way very little superior, was observed by the visitors who happened to see her, and to whom this harangue was made, to be so very pretty, that nothing could conceal or diminish her beauty. Her dark stuff gown gave new lustre to her lovely complexion; and her thick muslin cap could not confine her luxuriant dark hair. Her shape was symmetry itself, and her motions so graceful, that it was impossible to behold her, even attached to her humble employment at the wheel, without ac-

knowledging that no art could give what nature had bestowed upon her.

Orlando, who had loved her as a play-fellow while they were both children, now began to feel a more tender and more respectful affection for her; though unconscious himself that it was her beauty that awakened these sentiments. On the last of his holidays, before he entirely left school, the vigilance of Mrs. Lennard was redoubled, and she so contrived to confine Monimia, that their romping was at end, and they hardly ever saw each other, except by mere chance, at a distance, or now and then at dinner, when Monimia was suffered to dine at table; an honour which she was not always allowed, but which Mrs. Lennard cautiously avoided entirely suspending when Orlando was at the Hall, as there was nothing she seemed to dread so much as alarming Mrs. Rayland with any idea of Orlando's noticing her niece. This however never happened at that time to occur to the old lady; not only because Mrs. Lennard took such pains to lead her imagination from any such probability, but because she considered them both as mere children, and Monimia as a servant.

It was however at this time that a trifling incident had nearly awakened such suspicions, and occasioned such displeasure, as it would have been very difficult to have subdued or appeased. Mrs. Rayland had been long confined by a fit of the gout; and the warm weather of Whitsuntide had only just enabled her to walk, leaning on a crutch on one side, and on Mrs. Lennard on the other, in a long gallery which reached the whole length of the south wing, and which was hung with a great number of family pictures.—Mrs. Rayland had peculiar satisfaction in relating the history of the heroes and dames of her family, who were repre-

sented by these portraits.—Sir Roger De Coverley never went over the account of his ancestors with more correctness or more delight. Indeed, the reflections of Mrs. Rayland were uninterrupted by any of those little blemishes in the history of her progenitors, that somewhat bewildered the good knight; for she boasted that not one of the Rayland family had ever condescended to degrade himself by trade; and that the marriage of Mrs. Somerive, her aunt, was the only instance in which a daughter of the Raylands had stooped to an inferior alliance.—The little withered figure, bent down with age and infirmity, and the last of a race which she was thus arrogantly boasting—a race which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered—was a ridiculous instance of human folly and human vanity, at which Lennard had sense enough to smile internally, while she affected to listen with interest to stories which she had heard repeated for near forty years. It was in the midst of her attention to an anecdote which generally closed the relation of a speech made by Queen Anne to the last Lady Rayland on her having no son, that a sudden and violent bounce towards the middle of the gallery occasioned an interruption of the story, and equal amazement in the lady and her confidante; who both turning round, not very nimbly indeed, demanded of Monimia, who had been sitting in one of the old-fashioned bow-windows of which the casement was open, what was the matter?

Monimia, covered with blushes, and in a sort of scuffle to conceal something with her feet, replied, hesitating and trembling, that she did not know.

Mrs. Lennard, who probably guessed the truth, declared loudly that she would immediately find out. But it was not the work of a moment to set

her lady safely on one of the leathern settees, while she herself hastened to the window to discover, if possible, who had from the court below thrown in the something that had thus alarmed them. Before she reached the window, therefore, the court was clear; and Monimia had recovered from her confusion, and went on with her work.

Mrs. Lennard now thought proper to give another turn to the incident. She said, it must have been some accidental noise, from the wainscot's cracking in dry weather—though I could have sworn at the moment, cried she, that something very hard, like a stone or a stick, had been thrown into the room. However to be sure, I must have been mistaken, for certainly there is nobody in the court; and really one does recollect hearing in this gallery very odd noises, which, if one was superstitious, might sometimes make one uneasy.—Many of the neighbours some years ago used to say to me, that they wondered I was not afraid of crossing it of a night by myself, when you, Ma'am, used to sleep in the worked bed-chamber, and I lay over the house-keeper's room. But I used to say, that you had such an understanding, that I should offend you by shewing any foolish fears; and that all the noble family that owned this house time out of mind, were such honourable persons, that none of them could be supposed likely to walk after their decease, as the spirits of wicked persons are said to do. But, however, they used to answer in reply to that, that some of your ancestors, Ma'am, had hid great sums of money and valuable jewels in this house, to save it from the wicked rebels in the time of the blessed Martyr; and that it was to reveal these treasures that the appearances of spirits had been seen and strange noises heard about the house.

This speech was so exactly calculated to please

the lady to whom it was addressed, that it almost obliterated the recollection of the little alarm she had felt, and blunted the spirit of inquiry, which the twinges of the gout also contributed to diminish; and fortunately the arrival of the apothecary, who was that moment announced, and whose visits were always a matter of importance, left her no longer any time to interrogate Monimia. But Mrs. Lennard, having led her down to her great chair, and seen her safely in conference with her physical friend, returned hastily to the gallery, where Monimia still remained demurely at work; and peremptorily insisted on knowing what it was that had bounced into the room, and struck against the picture of Sir Hildebrand himself; who in armour, and on a white horse whose flanks were overshadowed by his stupendous wig, pranced over the great gilt chimney-piece, just as he appeared at the head of a county association in 1707.

Monimia was a poor dissembler, and had never in her life been guilty of a falsehood. She was as little capable of disguising as of denying the truth; and the menaces of her aunt frightened her into an immediate confession, that it was Mr. Orlando, who passing through the court to go to cricket in the park, had seen her sitting at the window, and, not thinking any harm, had thrown up his ball only in play to make her jump; but that it had unluckily gone through the window, and hit against the picture.

And what became of it afterwards? angrily demanded Mrs. Lennard.

It bounded, answered the innocent culprit—it bounded across the floor, and I rolled it away with my feet, under the chairs.

And how dared you, exclaimed the aunt, how dared you, artful little hussey, conceal the truth

from me? how dared you encourage any such abominable doings?—A pretty thing indeed to have happen!—Suppose the good-for-nothing boy had hit my lady or me upon the head or breast, as it was a mercy he did not—there would have been a fine story!—Or suppose he had broke the windows, shattered the panes, and cut us with the glass!—or what if he had beat the stained glass of my lady's coat of arms, up at top there, all to smash—what d'ye think would have become of you, you worthless little puss! what punishment would have been bad enough for you?

My dear aunt, said the weeping Monimia, how could I help it? I am sure I did not know what Mr. Orlando was going to do; I saw him but a moment before; and you know that, if I *had* known he intended to throw the ball up, I dared not have spoken to him to have prevented it.

Have spoken to him, indeed?—No, I think not; and remember this, girl, that you have come off well this time, and I shan't say any thing of the matter to my lady; but if I ever catch you speaking to that wicked boy, or even daring to look at him, I will turn you out of doors that moment—and let this teach you that I am in earnest. Having thus said, she gave the terrified trembling girl a violent blow, or what was in her language a good box on the ear, which forcing her head against the stone window-frame almost stunned her: she then repeated it on the lovely neck of her victim, where the marks of her fingers were to be traced many days afterwards; and flounced out of the room, and, composing herself, went down to give her share of information, as to her lady's complaint, to the apothecary.

The unhappy Monimia, who had felt ever since her earliest recollection the misery of her situation,

was never so sensible of it as at this moment. The work fell from her hands—she laid her head on a marble slab, that was on one side of the bow window, and gave way to an agony of grief.—Her cap had fallen from her head, and her fine hair concealed her face, which resting on her arms was bathed in tears. Sobs, that seemed to rend her heart, were the only expression of sorrow she was able to utter; she heard, she saw nothing—but was suddenly startled by something touching her hand as it hung lifelessly over the table. She looked up—and beheld, with mingled emotions of surprise and fear, Orlando Somerive: who, with tears in his eyes, and in a faultering whisper, conjured her to tell him what was the matter. The threat so recently uttered yet vibrated in her ears—and her terror, lest her aunt should return and find Orlando there, was so great, that, without knowing what she did, she started up and ran towards the door; from whence she would have fled, disordered as she was, down stairs, and through the very room where Mrs. Rayland, her aunt, and the apothecary were in conference, if Orlando, with superior strength and agility, had not thrown himself before her, and, setting his back against the door, insisted upon knowing the cause of her tears before he suffered her to stir.

Gasping for breath, trembling and inarticulately she tried to relate the effects of his indiscretion, and that therefore her aunt had threatened and struck her. Orlando, whose temper was naturally warm, and whose generous spirit revolted from every kind of injustice, felt at once his indignation excited by this act of oppression, and his anger that Mrs. Lennard should arraign him for a childish frolic, and thence take occasion so unworthily to treat an innocent girl; and being too rash to reflect on con-

sequences, he declared that he would go instantly into the parlour, confess to Mrs. Rayland what he had done, and appeal against the tyranny and cruelty of her woman.

It was now the turn of poor Monimia to entreat and implore; and she threw herself half frantic on her knees before him, and besought him rather to kill her, than to expose her to the terrors and distress such a step would inevitably plunge her into. Indeed, dear Orlando, cried she, you would not be heard against my aunt. Mrs. Rayland, if she forgave you, would never forgive me; but I should be immediately turned out of the house with disgrace; and I have no friend, no relation in the world but my aunt, and must beg my bread. But it is not so much that, added she, while sobs broke her utterance, it is not so much *that* I care for—*I* am so unfortunate that it does not signify what becomes of me: I can work in the fields, or can go through any hardship; but Mrs. Rayland will be very angry with you, and will not suffer you to come to the Hall again, and I shall—never—never see you any more.

This speech, unguarded and simple as it was, had more effect on Orlando than the most studied eloquence. He took the weeping trembling Monimia up in his arms, seated her in a chair; and drying her eyes, he besought her to be comforted, and to assure herself, that whatever he might feel, he would do nothing that should give her pain.—Oh! go then, for Heaven's sake go from hence instantly! replied Monimia.—If my aunt should come to look for me, as it is very likely she will, we should be both undone!

Good God! exclaimed Orlando, why should it be so?—why are we never to meet? and what harm to any one is done by my friendship for you, Monimia?

Alas! answered she, every moment more and more apprehensive of the arrival of her aunt, alas! Orlando, I know not; I am sure it was once, before my aunt was so enraged at it, all the comfort I had in the world; but now it is my greatest misery, because I dare not even look at you when I happen to meet you.—Yet I am sure I meant no hurt to any body; nor can it do my cruel aunt any harm, that you pity a poor orphan who has no friend upon earth.

I will, however, replied he warmly, pity and love you too—love you as well as I do any of my sisters—even the sister I love best—and I should hate myself if I did not. But, dear Monimia, tell me, if I cannot see you in the day time, is it possible for you to walk out of an evening, when these old women are in bed?—When I am not at the Hall they would suspect nothing; and I should not mind walking from home after our people are in bed, to meet you for half an hour any where about these grounds.

Ignorant of the decorum required by the world, and innocent, even to infantine simplicity, as Monimia was, at the age of something more than fourteen, she had that natural rectitude of understanding, that at once told her these clandestine meetings would be wrong. Ah no, Mr. Orlando! said she sighing, that must not be; for if it should be known——

It cannot, it shall not be known, cried he, eagerly interrupting her.

But it is impossible, my good friend, if it were not wrong; for you remember that to-day is Saturday, and your school begins on Monday.

Curse on the school! I had indeed forgot it.—Well, but promise me then, Monimia, promise me that you will make yourself easy now; and that when I come from school entirely, which I shall do

at Christmas, we shall contrive to meet sometimes, and to read together, as we used to do, the Fairy Tales, and the Arabian Nights, last year, and the year before —Will you promise me, Monimia?

Monimia, whose apprehensions every moment increased, and who even fancied she heard the rûstle of Mrs. Lennard's gown upon the private staircase that led down from the gallery, was ready to promise any thing.—Oh! yes, yes, Orlando!—I promise—do but go now, and we shall not perhaps be so unhappy: my aunt may not be so very ill-humoured when you come home again.

And say you will not cry any more now!

I will not, indeed I will not—but for God's sake go!—I'm sure I hear somebody.

There is nobody indeed; but I will go, to make you easy.—He then, trembling as much as she did, hastily kissed the hand he held; and gliding on tip-toe to the other end of the gallery, went through the apartments that led down the great staircase, and taking a circuit round another part of the house, entered the room where Mrs. Rayland was sitting, as if he had been just come from cricket in the park.

He had not left the gallery a moment before Mrs. Lennard came to look for Monimia, whom she found in greater agitation than she had left her, and still drowned in tears. She again began in the severest terms to reprove her; and as the sobs and sighs of the suffering girl deprived her of the power of answering her invectives, she violently seized her arm; and, dragging rather than leading her to her own room, she bade her instantly undress and go to bed—that you may not, said she, expose your odious blubbered face.

Poor Monimia was extremely willing to obey.—She sat down and began to undress, listening as

patiently as she could to the violent scolding which her indefatigable aunt still kept up against her; who having at length exhausted her breath, bounced out and locked the door.

Monimia, then left alone, again began to indulge her tears; but her room was in a turret over a sort of lumber-room, where the game-keeper kept his nets and his rods, and where Orlando used to deposit his bow, his cricket-bats, and other instruments of sport, with which he was indulged with playing in the park. She now heard him come in, with one of the servants; for such an effect had his voice, that she could distinguish it amid a thousand others, and when it did not seem to be audible to any one else.—Though she could not now distinguish the words, she heard him discoursing as if he seemed to be bidding the place farewell for that time. She got upon a chair (for the long narrow window was so far from the ground that she could not see through it as she stood;) and she perceived Orlando cross the park on foot, and slowly and reluctantly walk towards that part of it that was next to his father's house. She continued to look at him till a wood, through which he had to pass, concealed him from her view. She then retired to her bed, and shed tears. Orlando left his home the next day, for his last half-year at the school (having that evening taken leave of Mrs. Rayland;) and it was six months before Monimia saw him again.

CHAPTER III.

However trifling the incident was that is related in the foregoing chapter, it so much alarmed the prudent sagacity of Mrs. Lennard, that when, on the

following Christmas, Mr. Orlando returned to his occasional visits at the Hall, she took more care than before to prevent any possibility of his ever having an opportunity of meeting Monimia alone; and as much as she could without being remarked by her lady, from seeing her at all. But while she took these precautions, she began to think them useless. Orlando was no longer the giddy boy, eager at his childish sports, and watching with impatience for a game of blindman's buff in the servant's hall, or a romp with any one who would play with him. Orlando was a young man as uncommonly grave, as he was tall and handsome. There was something more than gravity, there was dejection in his manner; but it served only to make him more interesting. He now slept oftener than before at the Hall, but he was seen there less; and passed whole days in his own room, or rather in the library; where, as this quiet and studious temper recommended him more than ever to Mrs. Rayland, she allowed him to have a fire, to the great comfort and benefit of the books, which had been without that advantage for many years.

Mrs. Lennard, who now beheld him with peculiar favour, though she had formerly done him ill offices, seemed willing to oblige him in every thing but in allowing him ever to converse with her niece, who was seldom suffered to appear in the parlour, but was kept to work in her own room. Mrs. Rayland's increasing infirmities, though not such as threatened her life, threw the management of every thing about her more immediately into the hands of Mrs. Lennard; and, occupied by the care of her own health, Mrs. Rayland's attention to what was passing around her was less every day, and the imbecility of age hourly more perceptible. She therefore made no remark on this change of system; but

if she happened to want Monimia, or, as she chose to call her, Mary, she sent for her, and dismissed her when her service was performed, without any farther inquiry as to how she afterwards passed her time.

Orlando, however, though he had, since his last return, never spoken a word to Monimia, and though, in their few and short meetings, the presence of Mrs. Lennard prevented their exchanging even a look, was no longer at a loss to discriminate those sentiments which he felt for the beautiful orphan, whose charms, which had made almost in infancy an impression on his heart, were now opening to a perfection even beyond their early promise. Her imprisonment, the harshness of her aunt towards her, and her desolate situation, contributed to raise in his heart all that the most tender pity could add to the ardency of a first passion. Naturally of a warm and sanguine temper, the sort of reading he had lately pursued, his situation, his very name, all added something to the romantic enthusiasm of his character; but in the midst of the fairy dreams which he indulged, reason too often stepped in to poison his enjoyments, and represented to him, that he was without fortune, and without possession—that far from seeing at present any probability of ever being able to offer an establishment to the unfortunate Monimia, he had to procure one for himself. It was now he first felt an earnest wish, that the hopes his relations had sometimes encouraged might be realized, and that some part of the great wealth of the Rayland family might be his; but with this he had no new reason to flatter himself; for Mrs. Rayland, though she seemed to become every day more fond of his company, never took any notice of the necessity there was, that now in his nineteenth year he

should fix upon some plan for his future establishment in the world.

This necessity however lay heavy on the heart of his father, who had long felt with anguish, that the misconduct of his eldest son had rendered it impossible for him to do justice to his younger. With a small income and a large family, he had never, though he lived as economically as possible, been able to lay by much money; and what he had saved, in the hope of accumulating small fortunes for his daughters, had been paid away for his eldest son in the first two years of his residence at Oxford; the third had nearly devoured the five hundred pounds legacy given to the family by the elder Mrs. Rayland; and the first half-year after he left the university, and which he passed between London and his father's house, entirely exhausted that resource; while Mr. Somerive in vain represented to him, that, in continuing such a career, he must see the estate mortgaged, which was the sole dependence of his family now, and *his* sole dependence hereafter.

So deep, and often so fatal, are early impressions in minds where reason slowly and feebly combats the influence of passion, that though nothing was more certain than that Mrs. Rayland's fortune was entirely at her own disposal, and nothing more evident than her dislike to him, he never could be persuaded that, as he was the heir at law, he should not possess the greater part of the estate; and he was accustomed, in his orgies, among his companions, to drink "to their propitious meeting at the Hall, when the old girl should be in Abraham's bosom," and not unfrequently "to her speedy departure." He settled with himself the alterations he should make, and the stud he should collect; proposed to refit in an excellent style the old ken-

nel, and to restore to Rayland Hall the praise it had formerly boasted, of having the best pack of fox hounds within three counties. When it was represented that the possibility of executing these plans was very uncertain, since the old lady certainly preferred Orlando, he answered—Oh! damn it, that's not what I'm afraid of—No, no, the old hag has been, thanks to my fortunate stars, brought up in good old-fashioned notions, and knows that the first-born son is in all Christian countries the head of the house, and that the rest must scramble through the world as well as they can—As for my solemn brother, you see nature and fortune have designed him for a parson. The tabby may like him for a chaplain, and means to qualify him by one of her livings for the petticoats; but take my word for it, that however she may set her weazen face against it, just to impose upon the world, she likes at the bottom of her heart a young fellow of spirit—and you'll see me master of the Hall. Egad, how I'll make her old hoards spin again! Down go those woods that are now every year the worse for standing. Whenever I hear she's fairly off, the squirrels will have notice to quit.

It was in vain that the mild and paternal arguments of Mr. Somerive himself, or the tears and tender remonstrances of his wife, were employed, whenever their son would give them an opportunity, to counteract this unfortunate prepossession. He by degrees began to absent himself more and more from home; and when he was there, his hours were such as put any conversation on serious topics out of their power. He was never indeed sullen, for that was not his disposition; but he was so thoughtless, so volatile, and so prepossessed that he had a right to do as other young men did with whom he had been accustomed to associate, that

his father gave up as hopeless every attempt to bring him to his senses.

The greater the uneasiness to which Mr. Somerive was thus subject by the conduct of his eldest son, the more solicitous he became for the future establishment of the younger. But he knew not how to proceed to obtain it. He had now no longer the means of sending him to the university, of which he had sometimes thought, in the hope that Mrs. Rayland might, if he were qualified for orders, give him one of the livings of which she was patronness; nor could he, exhausted as his savings were by the indiscretion of his eldest son, command money enough to purchase him a commission, which he once intended. Sometimes he fancied that, if he were to apply to Mrs. Rayland, she would assist in securing an establishment in future for one about whom she appeared so much interested at present; but he oftener apprehended, from the oddity and caprice of her temper, that any attempt to procure more certain and permanent favours for Orlando, might occasion her to deprive him of what he now possessed.

Mrs. Somerive, though a woman of an excellent understanding, had contracted such an awe of the old lady, that she was positively against speaking to her about her son; while maternal partiality, which was indeed well justified by the good qualities and handsome person of Orlando, continually suggested to her that Mrs. Rayland's prepossession in his favour, if left to take its course, would finally make him the heir of at least great part of her property.

Thus his father, from uncertainty how to act for the best, suffered weeks and months to pass away, in which he could not determine to act at all; and as more than half those weeks and months were

passed at the Hall, his mother fondly flattered herself, that he was making rapid advances in securing to his family the possessions they had so good a claim to.

Neither of them saw the danger to which they exposed him, of losing himself in an imprudent and even fatal attachment to a young woman, while they supposed him wholly given up to acquire the favour of an old one; for in fact Mrs. Lennard had so artfully kept her niece out of sight, that neither of them knew her—they barely knew that there was a young person in the house who was considered in the light of a servant; but whether she was well or ill-looking, it had never occurred to them to inquire, because they never supposed her more acquainted with their son than any other of the female domestics.

Poor Orlando, however, was cherishing a passion, which had taken entire possession of his heart before he was conscious that he had one, and which the restraints that every way surrounded him served only to inflame Monimia now appeared in his eyes, what she really was, infinitely more lovely than ever. She was on his account a prisoner, for he learned that when he was not in the country she was allowed more liberty. She was friendless, and harshly treated; and, with a form and face that he thought would do honour to the highest rank of society, she seemed to be condemned to perpetual servitude, and he feared to perpetual ignorance; for he knew that Mrs. Rayland had, with the absurd prejudice of narrow minds, declared against her being taught any thing but the plainest domestic duties, and the plainest work. She had, however, taught herself, with very little aid from her aunt, to read; and lately, since she had been so much alone, she had tried to write; but she had not

always materials, and was frequently compelled to hide those she contrived to obtain: so that her progress in this was slow, and made only by snatches, as the ill-humour of her aunt allowed or forbade her to make these laudable attempts at improvement.

Her apartment was still in the turret that terminated one wing of the house, and Orlando had been at the Hall the greater part of a fortnight, without their having exchanged a single word. They had indeed met only twice by mere accident, in the presence of the lady of the mansion and of Mrs. Lennard; once when she crossed the hall when he was leading the lady to her chair out of the gallery; and a second time when she was sent for on an accession of gout, to assist in adjusting the flannels and cushions, which Mrs. Rayland declared she managed better than any body.

As she knelt to perform this operation, Orlando, who was reading a practical discourse on faith in opposition to good works, was surprised by her beautiful figure in her simple stuff gown, which had such an effect on his imagination that he no longer knew what he was reading: but, after half a dozen blunders in less than half a dozen lines, he became so conscious of his confusion that he could not proceed at all, but, affecting to be seized with a violent cough, got up and went out. Again, however, this symptom escaped Mrs. Rayland, who, though she read good books as a matter of form, and to impress people with an idea of her piety and understanding, cared very little about their purport, and was just then more occupied with the care of her foot than with abstract reasonings on the efficacy of faith.

In the meantime Monimia, who blushed if she beheld the shadow of Orlando at a distance, and

whose heart beat at the sound of his voice, as if it would escape from her bosom, had never an opportunity of hearing it, unless he accidentally spoke to some person in the room under hers, where she knew he often went, and particularly at this season, which was near the end of February, when the ponds were drawn, and the nets and poles in frequent use: but the door by which this room opened to the court was on the other side, Monimia had only one high long window in a very thick wall that looked into the park: whenever, therefore, as she sat alone in her turret, she heard any person in the room beneath her, she listened with an anxious and palpitating heart, and at length fancied that she could distinguish the step of Orlando from that of the game-keeper or any of the other servants.

If she was thus attentive to him, without any other motive than to enjoy the pleasure of fancying he was near her, Orlando was on his side studying how to obtain an opportunity of seeing her; not in the intention of communicating to her those sentiments which he now too well understood, but in the hope of finding means to make her amends for the injustice of fortune. If there was any dependence to be placed on expression of countenance, the animation and intelligence that were visible in the soft features of Monimia promised an excellent understanding. What pity that it should not be cultivated! What delight to be her preceptor, and, in despite of the malignity of fortune, to render her mind as lovely as her form! This project got so entirely the possession of Orlando's imagination, that he thought, he dreamed of nothing else; and, however difficult, or even impracticable it seemed, he determined to undertake it.

Mrs. Lennard slept at some distance; but there was no other way of Monimia's going into any part of the house but by a passage which led through her room; for every other avenue was closed up, and the last thing she did every night was to lock the door of the room where her niece lay, and to take away the key.

The window was equally well secured, for it was in effect only a loop; and of this, narrow as it was, the small square of the casement that opened was secured by iron bars. The Raylands had been eminent royalists in the civil wars, and Rayland Hall had held out against a party of Fairfax's army that had closely besieged it. Great part of the house retained the same appearance of defensive strength which had then been given it; and no knight of romance ever had so many real difficulties to encounter in achieving the deliverance of his princess, as Orlando had in finding the means merely to converse with the little imprisoned orphan. Months passed away, in which his most watchful diligence served only to prove that these difficulties were almost insurmountable; nor would he perhaps, with all the enthusiasm of love and romance, have ever conquered them, if chance had not befriended him.

Mrs. Rayland had given him, under restrictions that he should use it only while he was at the Hall, a very fine colt, which was of a breed of racers, the property of the Raylands, and very eminent in the days of Sir Hildebrand. Out of respect to its ancient prowess, the breed was still kept up, though the descendants no longer emulated the honours of their progenitors on the turf: but the produce was generally sold by the coachman, who had the management of the stable, and who was supposed to have profited very considerably by his dealings.

Orlando, highly gratified by this mark of Mrs. Rayland's favour, undertook to break the young horse himself, and to give it among other accomplishments that of leaping. There was no leaping-bar about the grounds; but in the lumber-room on the ground-floor of one of the turrets he had seen the timber of one that had formerly stood in the park. To this place, therefore, he repaired; and in removing the large posts, which were very little injured by time, some other slabs of wood, boards, and pieces of scaffolding were moved also, and Orlando saw that they had concealed a door, formerly boarded up, but of which the boards were now broken and decayed; he forced away a piece of the rotten wood, and saw a flight of broken stone steps, just wide enough to admit one person with difficulty. His heart bounded with transport: he knew that this staircase must lead to the top of the turret, and consequently wind round the room occupied by Monimia, which it was probable had a communication also with the stairs. But, unable to determine in a moment how he should avail himself, or acquaint her, of this fortunate discovery, and trembling lest it should be known, and his hopes at once destroyed, he hastily replaced the spars of wood that had concealed the door, before the return of the gardener and the under game-keeper, who had been assisting him in his operations about the leaping-bar; and hastily following them to the spot where they were putting it up, he affected to be interested in its completion while his mind was really occupied only by plans for seeing without fear of discovery his adored Monimia.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE rendered Orlando so politic, that he determined rather to defer the happiness he hoped for, in gaining unmolested access to Monimia for two or three days, than to risk by precipitancy the delightful secret of the concealed door, and to watch the motion of the dragon whose unwearied vigilance might at once render it useless. He therefore set himself to observe the hours when Mrs. Lennard was most certainly engaged about her mistress; and he found, that as she indulged very freely in the pleasures of a good table, of which she was herself directress, she became frequently unwilling to encounter much exertion after dinner; and generally left Monimia (who either did not dine below, or retired with the table cloth) unmolested till six o'clock, when, if he was not there, she was called down to make tea.

These hours therefore seemed most propitious for the experiment he must of necessity make, which was to ascend the staircase, and seek for the door that probably, though now blocked up, had originally led from it into the room inhabited by Monimia; from whence, as it was perhaps only boarded up, he hoped to make her hear, and to prevail upon her to assist in forcing a passage through it.

He knew Mrs. Lennard was less upon the *qui vive?* when he was not about the house; and therefore, the evening before that when he intended to put his project in execution, he took leave of Mrs. Rayland, and told her that he was going home for a few days, when with her permission he would return. Mrs. Rayland, who now thought the house melancholy without him, bade him come back to

the Hall as soon as he could, which he promised with a beating heart, and departed.

The next day, however, having taken the precaution to get a letter of compliment from his father to Mrs. Rayland, the better to account for his quick return, if to account for it should be necessary, he set out on foot after dinner; and as he arrived at Rayland Hall just as the servants of that family were eating theirs, which was always a long and momentous business, he had the good fortune not to meet any one, but to enter the lower room of the turret; and as he had often the key, he now locked the door, and listening very attentively heard Monimia walking above, and convinced himself that she was alone.

As silently as he could he removed the planks and timber that concealed the door; and having so placed them that, without discovering the aperture, they leaned so hollow from the wall that he could get under them, he tore away the remaining impediments that obstructed him, and entered the low staircase, of which about fourteen broken and decayed steps led, as he expected, to another door which was also boarded up, and then wound up to the top of the turret. He stopped a moment and listened; he distinctly heard Monimia sigh deeply, and open a drawer. He considered a moment what way of accosting her would be least likely to alarm her too suddenly, and at length he determined to speak.

After another pause, and finding all was silent in her room, he tapped softly against the boarded door; and lowering his voice he called, Monimia, Monimia!

The affrighted girl exclaimed, Good God! who is there? who speaks? Be not affrighted, replied he, speaking louder, it is Orlando. Orlando! and from whence, dear sir, do you speak! I know not,

for I cannot tell what part of your room this door opens to; tell me, where do you hear the sound I now make? Against the head of my bed. Cannot you then remove the bed, and see if there is not a door? I can, replied Monimia, if my trembling does not prevent me, for my bed goes upon casters; but indeed I tremble so! if my aunt should come! She will not come, replied Orlando impatiently: do not give way to groundless fears, Monimia; but, if ever you had any friendship for me, exert yourself now, to procure the only opportunity we shall ever have of meeting—remove your bed, and see what is behind it.

Monimia, trembling and amazed as she was, found in the midst of her alarm a sensation of joy that was undescribable. It lent her strength to remove the bed, which it was not difficult to do; but the room was hung with old-fashioned glazed linen, when many years before it had been fitted up as a bed-chamber: this kind of arras entirely hid the door. Ah! cried Monimia, there is no door, Mr. Orlando. The hangings are just the same here as about the rest of the room. Cut them, cried he, with your scissors, and you will find there is a door. But if my aunt should discover that they are cut? Oh heavens, exclaimed Orlando, if you are thus apprehensive, Monimia, we shall never meet; but if you have any regard for me——The adjuration was too powerful: Monimia forgot the dread of her aunt in the superior dread of offending Orlando. She took her scissors, and, cutting the hangings, which through time were little more than tinder, discovered the door, which was very thin, and only nailed up, strengthened on the outside by a few slight deals across it. Orlando, who like another Pyramus, watched with a beating heart the breach through which he now saw the light, forced away

these slight barriers with very little difficulty; and then, setting his foot against the door, it gave way, and the remnant of tattered hanging made no resistance. He found himself in the room with Monimia, who from mingled emotions of pleasure and fear could hardly breathe. At length, cried he, I have found you, Monimia! at length, I have got to you. But we shall both be utterly ruined, interrupted she, if my aunt should happen to come; speak low, for Heaven's sake, speak low. I should die upon the spot, if she should happen to find you here.

Let us consider, said Orlando, how we may meet for the future. I do not mean to stay now; but you see this door gives us always an opportunity of seeing each other. But how shall I dare? cried the trembling Monimia: my aunt watches me so narrowly, that I am never secure of being alone a moment: even now, perhaps, she may be coming.

So great was the terror which this idea impressed on the timid Monimia, that Orlando saw there was no time to be lost in settling their more secure meetings. Have you, said he, have you, Monimia, courage enough to make use of this door, to come down into the study to me when we are sure all the house is quiet? You know there is a passage to that end of the house, without crossing either of the great courts or any of the apartments, by going through the old chapel, and nobody can hear you. I only propose this, because I suppose you are afraid of letting me come up here.

Oh! either is very wrong, replied she, and I shall be sadly blamed.

Well, then, Monimia, I am deceived, cruelly deceived. I did believe that you had some regard for me, and I protest to Heaven that I mean nothing but the purest friendship towards you. I want you to read, which I know you have now no opportunity

of doing. I would find proper books for you; for you may one day have occasion for more knowledge than you can acquire in the way in which you now live. Perhaps clandestine meetings might not be right in any other case; but, persecuted as you are, Monimia, we must meet clandestinely or not meet at all. Alas! my dear friend, it may not be long that I may be here to ask this favour of you, or to request you to oblige me for your own good. My father is considering how to settle me in life.

To settle you! said Monimia, faintly.

Yes—I mean, to put me into some profession in the world; and whatever it is, it will of course carry me quite away from hence. As soon as it is determined upon, therefore, Monimia, I shall go—and perhaps we shall never meet again: yet you now refuse to grant me the only happiness that possibly my destiny will ever suffer me to taste—I mean that of being of some little service to you. What harm can there really be, Monimia, in what I request? Have we not lived from children together, like brother and sister? and why should we give up the sweet and innocent pleasure of loving each other, because your aunt is of a temper so detestably severe and suspicious?

Indeed I know not, said Monimia, whose tears now streamed down her cheeks; but I know, Orlando, that I cannot refuse what you ask; for, indeed, I do not believe you would desire me to act wrong.

No, I would die first.

Tell me then, what would you have me do? I tremble so that I am really ready to sink, lest my aunt should come: tell me, dear Orlando, what would you have me do?

Replace your bed as soon as I am gone, and I will take care that no signs shall remain below of

the discovery I have made. As soon as the family are all in bed, and you are sure your aunt is gone for the night, I will come up and fetch you into the study; where, whenever I am here, we can read for an hour or two every night: tell me, Monimia, do you agree to this?

I do, replied she; and now, dear Orlando, go; it will soon be tea-time, my aunt will come to call me.

You will be ready then to-night, Monimia.

To-night?

Yes; for why should we lose an hour, when perhaps so few are left me? When I am gone to some distant part of the world, you may be sorry for me, Monimia, and repent that when we could see each other you refused.

The idea of his going, perhaps for ever, was insupportable, and the timid doubts of Monimia vanished before it. She thought at that moment, that to pass one hour with him were well worth any risk—even though her aunt should discover and kill her. She hesitated therefore no longer, but promised to be ready in the evening, and to listen for his signal. Having thus gained his point, Orlando no longer refused to quit her, but returned by his propitious staircase; and replacing the boards, at its entrance below, as nearly as possible as he found them, he went out unseen by any body; and going back to the road which led through the park, he walked hastily across that part of it that was immediately before the windows of the apartment where Mrs. Rayland sat; and then went into the house, and sent up, as was his custom, to know if he might be admitted. She ordered him to be shewn up, and received him with pleasure; for she just then was in a very ill humour, and wanted somebody in whom she could find a

patient listener, while she related the cause of it, and declaimed against the persons who had occasioned it—which was thus:

The estates in this country were very large, and that possessed by the house of Rayland yielded in extent to none, but was equal to that of its nearest neighbour, a nobleman, who owned a great extent of country which immediately adjoined to the manors and farms of Mrs. Rayland, and on which there was also a fine old house, situated in the midst of the domain, at the distance of about five miles from Rayland Hall; the estates divided by a river, which was the joint property of both.

Lord Carloraine, the last possessor of this property, was a man very far advanced in life. Many years had passed since the world in which he had lived had disappeared; and being no longer able or desirous to take part in what was passing about a court, to him wholly uninteresting, and being a widower without children, he had retired above thirty years before to his paternal seat; where he lived in splendid uniformity, receiving only the nobility of the county and the baronets (whom he considered as forming an order that made a very proper barrier between the peerage and the squirality), with all the massive dignity and magnificent dulness that their fathers and grandfathers had been entertained with since the beginning of the century. Filled with high ideas of the consequence of ancient blood, he suffered no consideration to interfere with his respect for all who had that advantage to boast; while, for the upstart rich men of the present day, he felt the most ineffable contempt; and while such were, in neighbouring counties, seen to figure away on recently acquired fortunes, Lord Carloraine used to pique himself upon the inviolability of that part of the world where he lived—and say, that

very fortunately for the morals and manners of the country, it had not been chosen by nabobs and contractors for the display of their wealth and taste. And that none such might gain any footing in the neighbourhood, he purchased every farm that was to be sold; and contrived to be so much of a despot himself, that those who were only beginning to be great, shunned his established greatness as inimical to their own.

Mrs. Rayland perfectly agreed with him in these sentiments; and had the most profound respect for a nobleman, who acknowledged, proud as he was of his own family, that it had no other superiority over that of Rayland, than in possessing an higher title. He had been, though a much younger man, acquainted with the late Sir Hildebrand; and whenever Mrs. Rayland and Lord Carloraine met, which they did in cumbrous state twice or thrice a year, their whole conversation consisted of eulogiums on the days that were passed, in expressing their dislike of all that was now acting in a degenerate world, and their contempt of the actors.

But the winter preceding the period of which this history is relating the events, had carried off this ancient and noble friend at the age of ninety-six, to the regret of nobody so much as of Mrs. Rayland. His estate fell to the grandson of his only sister, a man of three-and-twenty, who was as completely the nobleman of the present day, as his uncle had been the representative of those who lived in the reign of George the First. He cared nothing for the ancient honours of his family; and would not have passed a fortnight in the gloomy solitude of his uncle's castle, to have been master of six times its revenue. His paternal property and parliamentary interest lay in a northern county; and therefore, as ready money was a greater ob-

ject to him than land in another part of England, he offered the estate of Lord Carloraine to sale, as soon as it came into his possession; and in a few months it was bought by the son of a rich merchant —a young man lately of age, of the name of Stockton; whose father having had very lucrative contracts in that war which terminated in 1763, had left his son a minor with a fortune, which at the end of a ten years minority amounted to little short of half a million.

The purchase of Carloraine Castle by such a man had given Mrs. Rayland inexpressible concern and mortification, which every circumstance that came to her knowledge had contributed to increase. She had already heard enough to foresee all the inconveniencies of this exchange of neighbours; on which she dwelt continually, yet seemed to take strange pains to irritate her own uneasiness by daily inquiries into the alterations and proceedings of Mr. Stockton; who, even before the purchase was generally known to be completed, had begun, under the auspices of modern taste, to new-model every thing. He came down to Carloraine Castle twice or thrice a week, every time with a new set of company; almost every one of his visitors was willing to assist him in his plan of improvements, and he listened to them all--so that what was built up to-day, was pulled down to-morrow. All the workmen, such as bricklayers, &c. &c. in the neighbourhood, for many miles, were engaged to work at the Castle; and the delicacies which used to be supplied by the neighbouring country, and in which Mrs. Rayland had usually a preference, were now offered first to his honour, 'Squire Stockton:—and his honour's servants, to whom the regulation of his house was entrusted, were so willing to do credit to their master's large fortune, that they gave London

prices for every thing: the vicinity of affluent luxury was thus severely felt by those to whom it was of much more real consequence than to Mrs. Rayland.

To her, however, this circumstance was particularly grating. She complained bitterly to every body she saw, that poultry, if she had by any accident occasion to buy it, was doubled in price; that the prime sea fish was carried to the Castle; and more money demanded for the refuse than she was accustomed to give for the finest. But with the beginning of September more aggravating offences began also. An army of sportsmen came down to the Castle, who had no respect for the hitherto inviolate manors, nor for the preserved grounds around Rayland Hall, which not even the game-keepers ever alarmed with an hostile sound. Her park—even her park, where no profane foot had ever been suffered to enter, was now invaded; and on the second of September, the day of which the occurrences have been here related, five young men and two servants with a whole kennel of pointers, had crossed the park, and killed three brace of partridges within its enclosure, laughing at the threats, and threatening in their turns the keepers, who had attempted to oppose them.

No injury or affront that could be devised could have made so deep an impression on Mrs. Rayland's mind, as such a trespass. She was yet in the first paroxysm of her displeasure, though the occasion of it happened early in the morning, when Orlando was admitted; whose mind, attuned to the harmonizing hope of being indulged with the frequent sight of Monimia, was but little in unison with the petulant and querulous complaints of Mrs. Rayland; while she for above an hour held forth with unwearied invective against the new inhabitant of

Carloraine. These, cried she, these are modern gentlemen!—Gentlemen! a disgrace to the name! --City apprentices, that used to live soberly at their shops, are turned sportsmen, forsooth, and have the impudence to call themselves gentlemen. I hear, and I suppose 'tis true enough, that Mr. Philip Somerive thinks proper to be acquainted with this mushroom fellow—and to be one of his party! —Pray, child, can you tell me—is it true?

I believe, madam, my brother has some acquaintance, but I fancy only a slight acquaintance, with Mr. Stockton.

Oh! I have very little curiosity—I dare say he is one of the set, and it is very fit he should. Birds of a feather, you know, flock together. But this I assure you, Mr. Orlando—take this from me—that if you should ever think proper to know that person, that Stockton, your visits here will from that time be dispensed with.

Orlando, conscious that he had never exchanged a word with any inhabitant or visitant of Carloraine, and conscious too that all his wishes were centred in what the Hall contained, assured Mrs. Rayland with equal warmth and sincerity, that he never had, nor ever would have, any connexion with the people who assembled there. So far from my wishing to hold with such people any friendly converse, I shall hardly be able to refrain from remonstrating with them on their very improper and unhandsome manner of acting towards you, madam; and if I meet them on your grounds, I shall, unless you forbid me, very freely tell them my opinion of their conduct.

Mrs. Rayland had never in her life been so pleased with Orlando as she was at that moment. The readiness with which he entered into her injuries, and the spirit with which he undertook to

check the aggressors, placed him higher in her favour than he had ever yet been; but her way of testifying this her satisfaction, consisted in what of all others was at this moment the most mortifying; for she invited him to stay to supper in her apartment, which was a favour she hardly did him twice a year. Orlando, wretched as it made him, could not make any excuse to escape; and it was near an hour later than usual, before Mrs. Rayland, retiring, dismissed Orlando to watch for the silence of the house, which was a signal for his going to the beloved turret.

CHAPTER V.

THE clock in the servants' hall struck twelve, and was answered by that in the north gallery. With yet deeper tone the hour was re-echoed from the great clock in the cupola over the stables; when Orlando, listening a moment to hear if all was quiet, proceeded through an arched passage which led from the library to the chapel, and then through the chapel itself, whose principal entrance was from a porch which opened to a sort of triangular court on the back of the house next the park. He had previously unbarred the chapel door, which was slightly secured by an iron rod: the lock had long since been rusted by time, and the key lost; for, since the death of Sir Hildebrand, who was buried with his ancestors in the chancel, the ladies his daughters had found themselves too much affected to enter the chapel (which was also the church of the small parish of Rayland), and had removed the parochial service to that of the next parish, within a mile: and as both belonged to them, the livings

were united, and the people of either were content to say their prayers wherever their ladies chose to appoint.

Orlando, till he found it opened his way to Monimia, without going through or near any inhabited part of the house, had never explored the chapel; but the night before that on which the experiment was to be made, he had taken care to see that in his passage through it he had no impediment to fear; for of those superstition might have raised to deter a weaker mind, or one engaged in a less animating cause, he was insensible.

He now, having convinced himself that all the family were retired, walked softly through the aisle; and having without any difficulty opened the door of the porch, that adjoined the pavement round the east or back front, he stepped with light feet along it, entered the lower room of the turret which was nearly opposite, and ascended, still as silently as he could, the narrow staircase.

Monimia! Monimia! cried he in a half whisper, Monimia, are you ready? I am, replied a low and tremulous voice. Remove the hangings, then, said Orlando. Slowly the faltering hands of the trembling girl removed them. Orlando eagerly received her as she came through the door-way. Are you here at last? cried he vehemently. Shall I be at liberty at last to see you? But how cold you are! how you tremble! Ah! Mr. Orlando, answered Monimia, half shrinking from him, ah! I am so certain that all this is wrong, I so dread a discovery, that it is impossible to conquer my terrors: besides, I have recollected that one of the windows of my aunt's closet up stairs looks this way. If she should be in it, if she should see us!—

How can she be in it without a light? She hardly sits there in the dark for her amusement. You

know it is impossible she can have any suspicion; yet you torment yourself, and destroy all my happiness by your timidity. Ah, Monimia! you are cruel to me.—I would not be cruel to you for a thousand worlds, Orlando, you know I would not. But, if I were to die, I cannot conquer my terrors. I tremble too with cold as well as with fright; for I have waited so long past my hour of going to bed, that I am half frozen.

And yet you are not glad to see me, Monimia, when at last I am come.

Indeed I am glad, Orlando; but hush! hark, surely I heard a noise. Listen a moment for Heaven's sake, before we go down.

It is nothing, said Orlando, after a pause, it is nothing, upon my soul, but the wind that rushes up the narrow staircase to the top of the tower.

Speak low, however, replied Monimia, as she gave him her cold tremulous hand to lead her slowly down the ruined steps; speak very low; or rather let us be quite silent, for you remember what an echo there is in the court.

They then proceeded silently along the flagstones that surrounded the court opening on one side to the park, and entered the porch of the chapel; where when Monimia arrived, she seemed so near fainting, that, as they were now sheltered from all observation, Orlando entreated her to sit down on one of the thick old worm-eaten wooden benches that were fixed on either side.

Unable to support herself, Orlando made her lean against him, as endeavouring to re-assure her, he besought her to conquer an alarm, for which, said he, Monimia, I cannot account. What do you fear, my sweet friend? Do you already repent having entrusted yourself with me?

Oh! no indeed, sighed Monimia, but the chapel!—What of the chapel? cried Orlando impatiently.—It is haunted, you know, every night, by the spirit of one of the Lady Raylands, who I know not how long ago died for love, and whose ghost now sits every night in the chancel, and sometimes walks round the house, and particularly along the galleries, at midnight, groaning and lamenting her fate.

Orlando, laughing at her simplicity, cried, And who, my dear Monimia, who has violated thy natural good sense by teaching thee these ridiculous stories? Believe me, none of the Lady Raylands, as you called them, ever died for love; indeed I never heard that any of them ever were in love but my grandmother, who saved herself the absurdity of dying, by marrying the man she liked, in despite of the opposing pride of her family; and as she was very happy, and never repented her disobedience, I do not believe her spirit walks: or if it should, Monimia, if it were possible that it should, could you not face a ghost with me for your protector?

Any living creature I should not fear, Orlando, if you were with me; but there is something so dreadful in the idea of a spirit!

This is not a place, said Orlando with quickness, this is not a place to argue with your prejudices, Monimia, for you seem half dead with cold; but come, I beseech you, into the library, where there is a fire, and trust to my arm to defend you from all supernatural beings at least, on the way.

He then drew her arm within his, and pushed open the door of the chapel. When Monimia felt the cold damp that environed her as he shut it after them, and found herself in such a place, without any other light than what was afforded by

two gothic windows half blocked with stone work, and almost all the rest by stained glass, at midnight, in a night of September, she again shuddered and shrunk back: but Orlando again encouraging her, and ridiculing her fears, she moved on, and passing the stone passage, he at length seated her safely by the study fire, which he now replenished with wood. As she was still pale and trembling, he brought her a glass of wine (of which Mrs. Rayland allowed him whatever he chose), which he insisted on her drinking, and then, seating himself by her, inquired with a gay smile, how she did after her encounter with the lady who died for love?

You think me ridiculous, Orlando, and perhaps I am so; but my aunt has often told me, that ghosts always appeared to people who were doing wrong, to reproach them; and, alas! Orlando, I am too sensible that I am not doing right.

Curse on her prudish falsehood! cried the impetuous Orlando. If ghosts, as you call them, were always on the watch to persecute evil doers, I believe from my soul that *she* would have been beset by those of all the Raylands that are packed together in the chancel.

Such was the awe of her aunt in which Monimia had been brought up, that the little respect and vehement manner in which Orlando spoke of her, had in it additional terror. She did not speak; she was not able; but the tears which had till then trembled in her eyes now stole down her cheeks. Orlando was tempted to kiss them away before they reached her bosom; but he remembered that she was wholly in his power, and that he owed her more respect than it would have been necessary to have shewn even in public.

Let us talk no more of your old aunt, re-assumed

Orlando; but tell me, Monimia, all that has happened in these long, long months of absence.

Happened, Mr. Orlando! repeated Monimia.

Nay, interrupted he, let me not be *Mr.* Orlando, my lovely friend, but call me Orlando, and try to fancy me your brother. Tell me, Monimia, how have you passed your time since I was allowed to see you last? What an age it is ago! Have you practised your writing, Monimia, and has Lennard allowed you the use of any books?

A few I got at by the assistance of Betty Richards, who has the key of this room to clean it when you are absent, Orlando; but if my aunt had found it out, she would never have forgiven either of us. I was forced therefore to hide the books she took out for me with the greatest care, and to read only by snatches. And as to writing, I have done a little of it because you desired me; but it has been very difficult; for my aunt Lennard never would allow me to have pens and ink; and Betty Richards has given me these too by stealth, when she was able to procure them, as if they were for herself, of Mr. Pattenson the butler, who was always very kind to her about such things, till a week or two ago; when he was so cross at her asking for more paper, that we thought it better to let alone applying to him again for some time.

The old thief was jealous, I suppose, answered Orlando. I believe he was, said Monimia, for he has a liking, I fancy, to Betty, though to be sure he is old enough to be her father.

Orlando was now struck with an apprehension which had never before occurred to him: he feared that, in the gratitude of her unadulterated heart for the kindness she received from this Betty Richards, she might betray to her the secret of their nocturnal visits: and he knew that the love of

gossiping, the love of finery, the love of nice morsels which the butler had it in his power to give, or even the love of shewing she was entrusted with a secret, were any of them sufficient to overset all the fidelity which this girl (the under house-maid) might either feel or profess to feel for Monimia.

Against this therefore it was necessary to put her on her guard; which Orlando endeavoured to do in the most impressive manner possible, and even urged her with warmth to give him her solemn promise that she never would entrust this servant with any secret, or mention to her his name on any account whatever.

Indeed, Orlando, replied Monimia, when he had finished this warm exhortation, indeed you need not be uneasy or anxious about it; for there is one reason that, if I had no other, would never permit me to tell this poor girl that I meet you unknown to my aunt.

And what is that?

It is, that Betty is, like myself, a very friendless orphan, a poor girl that my aunt has taken from the parish; and as I know very well that all our meetings will one day or other be discovered, it would entirely ruin her, and occasion the loss of her place and her character, if Betty were supposed to know any thing about it; therefore you may be assured, Orlando, that she never shall: for whatever misery it may be my fate to suffer myself, I shall not so much mind, as I should being the cause of ruining and injuring another person, especially a friendless girl, who has always been as kind to me as her situation allowed her to be.

Enchanted with her native rectitude of heart and generosity of spirit, Orlando rapturously exclaimed, Charming girl! how every sentence you utter, every sentiment of your pure and innocent mind

delight me! No, Monimia, I am very sure that such a security as you have given me is of equal force, perhaps superior as it ought to be, even to your faith to me—superior, Monimia, to the wish which I am sure you have, to spare me any sort of unhappiness. The fine eyes of Monimia were swimming in tears, as, tenderly pressing her hand between his, Orlando said this. You do me justice, said she in a faltering voice, and I thank you. I do not know, Orlando, why I should be ashamed to say that I love you better than any body else in the world; for indeed who is there in it that I have to love? If you were gone, it would be all a desert to me; for though I hope I am grateful, and not undutiful to my aunt Lennard, I find I do not love her as I love you. But indeed I do believe she would not have me feel affection for any body; for she is always telling me, that it is the most disgraceful and odious thing imaginable, for a young woman, dependant as I am, to think about any person, man, woman, or child; and that, if I would not be an undone and disgraced creature, I must mind nothing but praying to God, which I hope I never neglected, and learning to earn my bread by my hands. And then she tells me continually how much I owe her for taking me into her lady's family, and what a wicked wretch I should be if I were ungrateful.

Don't tell me any more about your aunt, do not, I entreat you, cried Orlando impatiently. I should be sorry to say any thing that should stain, even with the most remote suspicion of ingratitude, that unadulterated mind. But——I cannot——no, it is impossible to resist saying, that, like all other usurped authority, the power of your aunt is maintained by unjust means, and supported by prejudices, which if once looked at by the eye of reason

would fall, so slender is the hold of tyranny, my Monimia!

Dear Orlando, said Monimia smiling through her tears, you talk what is by me very little understood. No! replied he, she has taken care to fetter you in as much ignorance as possible; but your mind rises above the obscurity with which she would surround it. She has however brought in supernatural aid; and, fearful of not being able to keep you in sufficient awe by her terrific self, she has called forth all the deceased ladies of the Rayland family, and gentlemen too for aught I know, and beset you with spirits and hobgoblins if you dare to walk about the house.

Ah! Orlando, answered Monimia timidly, and throwing round the room a half fearful glance, I do believe you injure my aunt Lennard in that notion; for I am almost sure she believes what she tells me.

Pooh! replied he, she has too much sense. A good bottle of Barbadoes water, or ratafia, would call your pious aunt in the darkest night, and just as the clock strikes twelve, into the very chancel of the chapel itself, or even into the vaults under it.

Do not laugh at such things, Orlando; do not, pray; unless you are very sure they are all foolish and superstitious fancies. I assure you, Orlando, that having been used to walk about this great old rambling house by myself, at all times of the day, and sometimes, when you have not been here, late of a night, I cannot have been much used to indulge fear; for, frightened or not frightened, I must have gone if my lady or my aunt had ordered me. But though I am not the least afraid, or used not to be afraid, when I was assured in my own heart that I had never done or intended any harm, yet I have seen and heard——

Nay then, Monimia, tell me what you have seen

and heard, cried he, fixing his eyes eagerly on her face, and pulling his chair nearer to hers, and let us draw round the fire and have a discourse upon apparitions.

You will laugh at me, Orlando, said she, looking smilingly and yet grave; but what I have to tell you is true nevertheless.

Tell it then, Monimia—If any proofs have power to make me a convert, they must be yours.

Well then, Orlando, I assure you it is no fancy, but absolutely true, that some time last February, at which time my aunt was very ill by the fall she had down stairs, she used to intrust me with the keys, and to send me all about the house for things she wanted. You know that when Mr. Pattenson is out, she always insists upon having the keys of the great cellars, as well as all the rest, left with her; and that, after quarrelling some years about it, she has got the better; and, though he will not give her his keys, has my lady's leave to have keys of her own, which she always takes particular pleasure in using when he is out (which he happened to be that night at the christening of Mr. Butterworth's child), whether she really wants the things she sends for or no. It was a terrible stormy night, and very dark, when my aunt, who was but just got well enough to sit in my lady's room, took it into her head, after every body was gone to bed, but Betty Richards and I, that she wanted some hot shrub and water. She sent me to look for shrub in her closet, where I believe she knew there was none; and when I came back to say there was none, she bade me go into the east wing-cellar, which goes, you know, under the house, towards this end of it, and fetch half a dozen bottles; and she gave me the key and a basket. I stood trembling with fear; for had I been sure of being killed even at

that moment, I am very certain I could not have determined to venture alone.

What is the foolish girl afraid of? said my aunt. Of going alone so far, Ma'am, said I, at this time of night.

And is not *this* time of night, said my aunt angrily, or is not *any* time of night, or any time of day, the same thing to *you?* Idiot!—and do you dare to affect any choice, how and when you shall obey my commands?

Oh! no indeed, my dear, dear aunt, answered I trembling, no indeed; but remember—remember, before you are so angry with me, that an hundred and an hundred times you have told me, that all the galleries and passages about this house are haunted; and that you have yourself seen strange sights and heard frightful noises, though you never would tell me what they were: how shall I, my dear aunt, encounter that which has terrified you?—Pray, forgive me! or, if you will not, inflict upon me any punishment you please: only be assured, my dear, dear aunt, that, terrible as your anger is to your poor girl, she had rather endure it than go into those passages and vaults alone.

Why thou art a driveller, a perfect idiot, answered Mrs. Lennard, and art fit only for a cap and bells, clean straw, and a whirligig.—Apparitions, you stupid fool! But tell me, will you go for what I want, if this other moppet, who looks as white as a cheese-curd, will go with you?

The offer of going with Betsy Richards had somehow quite a charm with it, compared with the terrors of going alone; and therefore I readily agreed to the proposal, flattering myself that Betsy would refuse, and that I should so be excused.

But poor Betsy had, like myself, a most terrible awe of my aunt, whom ever since she could remem-

ber she had been taught to fear. To be sure I will go, said poor Betsy; to be certain, I will go, if, madam, she desires it; though for certain——

None of your ifs, you silly baggage! but here, take the candle; and do you, you nonsensical ninnyhammer, take the basket, and fetch instantly what I want. The old shrub stands in a bin, quite at the lower end of the farthest arched vault, next the chapel wing: put your hands elbow deep in the saw-dust, and you will feel it; bring half a dozen bottles, and mind you take care of your candle—for the whole family of Rayland are piled up in their velvet coffins within two or three feet of you; and it would be a very unhandsome thing to set their old dry bones in a blaze on their own premises.

Neither Betsy nor I dared answer; for, as my aunt spoke these last words, she waved her hands for us to go. After we were out of hearing, I, who held Betsy fast by the arm, expressed my apprehension at what had passed. I did this more particularly, because I had never heard my aunt talk so freely before. Betsy, frightened as she was at the thought of the expedition we were undertaking, could not help tittering at the surprise I expressed, and said, Lord! why, the old woman has been sitting so long after supper with madam, that she has been taking care to keep the cold out of her stomach:—meaning that Mrs. Lennard had been drinking too much, which till then I had never any notion of. I am sure, replied I to my trembling companion, as we went down the cellar stairs, and were frightened by the echo of our feet, I am sure, Betsy, we want something to keep the cold of fear out of *ours*.—Do I tremble as much as you do, and do I look as pale? Oh! hush, said she, hush! I shall drop if I hear a voice—it sounds so among

these hollow doors. Her teeth chattered in her head, and she held the candle in her hand so unsteadily that I was afraid it would have gone out. In this manner we proceeded to the bottom of the stairs, which you know are very long, and had got half a dozen paces along the passage, which is, you may remember, very high and narrow and long, when we heard a loud rushing noise at the other end of it. Something came sweep along; but Betsy let fall the candle, and fell herself against the wall, where I endeavoured in vain to support her. She sunk quite down; and, as I stooped to assist her, somebody certainly brushed by me. I know not what I heard afterwards, for fear deprived me of my senses. This, however, lasted but a moment; for, my recollection returning, I was sensible that whatever there was to hurt us, we should do more wisely to endeavour to return back to my aunt's room than to remain in that dismal place. With great difficulty, by rubbing her hands within mine, and reasoning with her as soon as she seemed able to hear it, I prevailed upon Betsy Richards to try to walk. The apprehension that this frightful apparition might return (which she whispered me had the figure of a tall man in a white or light-coloured gown), had more effect upon her than any thing I could say; and she consented to try to return up the stairs. It was so dark, however, that we were obliged to feel our way with our hands; and I own I every moment expected to put them against the frightful figure which my companion had seen.

But you were wrong there, said the incredulous Orlando; for if it were a ghost, Monimia, you know a ghost is only air, and of course you could not have touched it.—But tell me how your aunt received you.

It was, I am sure, almost half an hour before we

got back, more dead than alive, to the oak parlour. She asked us very impatiently, what we had been so long about? but neither of us was presently able to answer. She saw how it was by our faces, but very sharply bade us tell her that moment what was the matter. Betsy had then more courage than I had; for I was more afraid of my aunt, if possible, than of the ghost, and so she related as well as she could all she saw or fancied she saw. Mrs Lennard was extremely angry with us both, and scolded us for a quarter of an hour; which I thought a little unreasonable towards me, since she was angry with me now for being afraid of the very things she had been teaching me to fear. However, as there was no chance of persuading us to make another attempt that night, and she was disabled by lameness from going herself, she was forced to be content with some other of the cordials she had in her closet; and afterwards she rather wished to have the story hushed up and forgotten, for somehow or other that key of the cellar was never found after that night. The basket and the candle remained where they were dropped; yet the key, which was a very great heavy key, and which I had in my hand, was gone; and Mr. Pattenson would have made such a racket about it, that my aunt, as she had another, let the story drop, and contrived an excuse a week or two afterwards, when she was able to get about herself, to have the lock changed.

And this is all the reason you have, my Monimia, from your own observation, to believe in spirits? said Orlando.

All! replied she, and is it not then enough?

Not quite, I fear, to convince the scepticism of the present day. I do not, however, wish to prejudice your mind on the other side, by bringing

arguments against the possibility of their existence; but I will give your reason an opportunity of deciding for itself. Against to-morrow night, when we shall meet again, I will look out and mark for you all those stories of supernatural appearances that are related by the most reasonable people, and are the best authenticated. You shall fairly inquire whether any of those visits of the dead were ever found to be of any use to the living. We are told that they have been seen (as is reported of that vision which Clarendon tells of), to warn the persons to whom they appeared, or some others to whom they were to repeat their mission, of impending danger. But the danger, however foretold, has never been avoided; and shall we therefore believe, that an all-wise and all-powerful Being shall suffer a general law of nature to be so uselessly violated, and shall make the dead restless, only to terrify the living?

Oh! but in cases of murder you know what spectres have appeared!

Yes, Monimia, to the conscience of the guilty; but even that is not always ready to raise hideous shadows to persecute the sanguinary monsters who are stained with crimes; for if it were, Monimia, I am afraid not one of our kings or heroes could have slept in their beds.

And yet, said Monimia shuddering, and yet, Orlando, you sometimes talk of being a soldier!

Ah! my sweet friend, replied Orlando, I have no choice, but must be what they would have me. Yet believe me, Monimia, if I had a choice, it would be to pass all my life in some quiet retirement with you. We should not want either of us to be very rich, for we should certainly be very happy.

To this poor Monimia felt herself quite unable to answer; but sighing deeply, from the fear that

it could never be, she tried to turn the discourse: Is it not very late, Orlando, said she, and had I not better go?

If you insist upon going yet, I shall be half tempted to let you travel through the chapel alone, replied he smiling, and, to revenge myself for your desertion, expose you to meet the tall man in the white dress. He then led the conversation to other subjects, gave her some books he had selected for her reading, and some materials for writing; and, after insisting upon her promise to meet him the next night, he consented that she should return to her turret. As, with his arm round her waist, he conducted her through the chapel, and still found her tremble, he gently reproached her with it. Ah! said she, Orlando, you are surely unreasonable, if you expect me to be as courageous as you are! Not at all, answered he; for you may derive your confidence from the same source, and say, as I do, *I fear no evil angel, and have offended no good one.*

Monimia promised to do all she could towards conquering her apprehensions. They were by this time arrived at the door of her chamber, where tenderly kissing her hand, he again bade her good night, or rather good morning, for it was near three o'clock; and waiting till he heard the door safely concealed by her bed, and hearing that all was secure, he turned to his own room, and went to rest in spirits disposed to indulge delicious dreams of happiness to come.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER and another evening Orlando attended at the turret, and the apprehensions of Monimia

decreased in proportion as her reason, aided by her confidence in him, taught her that there was in reality little to fear from the interposition of supernatural agency. The dread of being discovered by people in the house, however, still interrupted the hours which passed with imperceptible rapidity while they were together. This might happen a thousand ways, which Monimia was ingenious in finding out; while Orlando was sometimes successful, and sometimes failed, in ridiculing those apprehensions, which he could not always help sharing.

The mind of the innocent Monimia had been till now like that of Miranda in her desert island. To her, the world that was past, and that which was now passing, was alike unknown; and all the impressions that her infant understanding had received, tended only to confirm the artificial influence which her aunt endeavoured to establish over her imagination. Her poverty, her dependence, the necessity of her earning a subsistence by daily labour, had been the only lessons she had been taught; and the only hope held out to her, that of passing through life in an obscure service.

But she had learned now that abject and poor as she was, she was an object of affection to Orlando, who seemed in her eyes the representation of divinity. The reading he had directed her to pursue, had assisted in teaching her some degree of self-value. She found that to be poor was not disgraceful in the eye of Heaven, or in the eyes of the good upon earth; and that the great Teacher of that religion which she had been bid to profess, though very little instructed in it, was himself poor, and the advocate and friend of poverty. In addition to all this knowledge, so suddenly acquired, she had lately made another discovery. Her aunt had always told

her that she was a very plain girl, had a bad person, and was barely fit to be seen; but since the marriage of the servant who had lived at the Hall during the infancy of Monimia, Betty Richards, the under house-maid, had been ordered to do the little that Monimia was allowed to have done in her room. Mrs. Lennard had taken her from the parish officers as an apprentice; and having long seen her only in her coarse gown and nailed shoes, and observed in her manner only a great deal of rustic simplicity, had not the least idea that under that semblance she concealed the cunning and the vanity of a country coquette; and that the first week she passed in Mrs. Rayland's family had called forth these latent qualities. She was a ruddy, shewy girl, with a large but rather a good figure; and her face was no sooner washed, and her hair combed over a roll, than she became an object which attracted the attention of the great Mr. Pattenson himself; who, proceeding in the usual way by which he had won the favour of so many of the subaltern nymphs in Mrs. Rayland's kitchen, began to make her many presents, and to talk of her beauty; and as she could not forbear repeating all these extravagant expressions of his admiration, Monimia could as little help reflecting, though she was somehow humbled as she made the comparison, that if Betty was so handsome, she could not herself be so ugly as her aunt had always represented her. The fineries which her new friend received, Monimia beheld without any wish to enjoy such herself; though on Betty, a poor girl bred in a work-house, they had a most intoxicating effect. They were given under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, which was tolerably well observed towards the rest of the house; and the finery, which at first consisted only of beads and ribbons, was reserved for Sunday afternoons,

and put on at a friend's cottage near a distant church. But it was not in female nature to conceal these acquisitions from Monimia; and it was in her drawers that they were often deposited, when there was reason to apprehend that the little deal box, which had till lately been amply sufficient for the check apron and linsey-woolsey gown of Betty, might not safely conceal the ribbands "colour of emperors' eyes," the flowered shawls, the bugle necklaces, and caps with new edging to them, which she now possessed.

Sometimes, when Betty obtained leave to go out, and thought that, Mrs. Lennard being engaged with her lady, and the other servants gone different ways, she should escape unnoticed across the park, she persuaded Monimia, who knew not how to refuse her any thing, to let her dress at her little glass; and there the progress of rural coquetry had full power to display itself. She tried on her various topknots, disposed her hair in a thousand fanciful ways, and called to Monimia for her opinion, which of them was most becoming; appealing for the authority of these variations to a certain pocket-book, presented her also from the same quarter, which represented in one of its leaves "six young ladies in the most fashionable head-dresses for 1776."

Monimia, with all her ingenuous simplicity, had sense enough to smile at the ridiculous vanity of the girl; and to know, that her accepting all this finery from the old butler was quite wrong. But she felt also that to reprove her for it would look like envy, and that to remonstrate would probably be vain. She contented herself therefore with keeping as much out of her confidence as she could: and had reasons enough of her own, which were continually strengthened by the exhortations of Or-

lando, for keeping her from being a too frequent visitor in her room.

But the remarks she made upon all this, and upon numberless circumstances in the house which Betty related to her, no longer left her in her original ignorance. In a great house there are among the servants as many cabals, and as many schemes, as among the leaders of a great nation; and few exhibited a greater variety of interests than did the family of Mrs. Rayland. Mrs. Lennard at once hated, feared, and courted Pattenson, who having been taken a boy from the plough, had been gradually promoted till he became the favourite footman of the elder Mrs. Rayland, who, on the death of an old man who had long occupied that post, made him butler; where he was supposed to have accumulated in the course of five-and-twenty years a great deal of money, was known to have several sums out at interest, and had bought two or three small farms in the county, with the approbation of his lady, whose favour had never once failed him, though various attempts had been made to injure him in her opinion by complaints of his amours. Though he was a perfect Turk in morals, and though in his advanced life he rather indulged than corrected this propensity to libertinism, he had hitherto contrived to escape his lady's wrath; and indeed knew that nobody but Mrs. Lennard or the old coachman had, among the domestics, interest enough to shake her good opinion of him; and of both the one and the other, though aware that neither of them bore him any good will, he was tolerably secure.

How the prudent and guarded Mrs. Lennard came to be in his power was never fully understood; but in his power she certainly felt herself: for though they were in habits of frequent squabbling about trifles, which indeed with the lady seem-

ed necessary to break the tedious uniformity of her life, yet whenever she found Mr. Pattenson really angry, she, albeit unused to the condescending mood, began to palliate and apologize—and peace was generally made over some nice thing, and some fine old wine, by way of a *petit souper* in Mr. Pattenson's parlour, after Mrs. Rayland was gone to bed.

The old coachman, who was the other favourite servant, was always a third in these peace-making meetings. He was a man grown unwieldy from excess of good living, and more than seventy years old; but he possessed an infinite deal of cunning, and knew how to get and how to keep money, with which it was his ambition to portion his two daughters, and to marry them to gentlemen, and his dealings in contraband goods, as Rayland Hall was only eight miles from the coast, his having the management of the great farms in hand, and his concern in buying and selling horses, were together supposed to have rendered this object of ambition an easy attainment. Of deeper sagacity than the other two, he foresaw that the time could not be far distant when Rayland Hall, and all the wealth that belonged to it, must change its possessor. It was a plan of Mrs. Lennard and Pattenson to enjoy and to secure all they could now, and to be well assured of a very considerable legacy hereafter. But old Snelcraft had further hopes; and for that reason, though he had at first opposed as much as he could the reception of Orlando, and since expressed displeasure towards him, he of late had in his head floating visions of the probability there was that, if Orlando came to the estate, he might marry his favourite daughter, Miss Patty Snelcraft, who would have such a fine fortune, and was, as her father believed, the very extract of all beauty. Ridiculous and chimerical as such a project was,

the old man, in the dotage of his purse-proud vanity, believed it not only possible but probable: for, though he knew that Mrs. Rayland would have disinherited her own son for entertaining such an idea for a moment, yet he saw that Mr. Orlando had no pride at all; and he was pretty sure, from the arrangements that he believed were made as to money, that, great as the sum of ready money would perhaps be that Mrs. Rayland might leave behind her, none of it would be suffered to go to Mr. Orlando. Miss Patty Snelcraft was, as this precious plan got more entirely the possession of her father's imagination, taken from a boarding-school at a neighbouring town, and one luckless day brought to church in all the finery which she had there been accustomed to wear. But the effect was very far from that her parents intended, who expected that Madam would have sent for her to the Hall, as she used to do at breaking up, and have commended her beauty and elegance; instead of which, Mrs. Rayland no sooner arrived at home than she sent for Robin, as she still called her old servant, who now was seldom able to mount the box himself, and asked if it was possible that the tawdry thing she had seen with his wife was his daughter? He answered in all humility that it was his eldest daughter, who, as she had now finished her learning, he had taken home from boarding-school.

Finished her learning! exclaimed the old lady; and is that what she has learned, to dress herself out like a stage-player, like a mountebank's doxy? Upon my word, Robin, I am sorry for you. I thought you and your wife had more sense. What! is that a dress for a sober girl, who ought to be a help to her mother, and to take care of her father in his old age?

She does, Ma'am, do both, I'll assure you, answered Robin, terribly stung by this reproof, and is a very good and dutiful child. And as to her fineries, Ma'am, and such like, you are sensible that I'm not myself, no judge of them there things; and my wife I believe thought, that seeing how by your goodness and my long and faithful service we are well to pass, for our condition and circumstances and such like, there would not be no offence whatsumdever in dressing our poor girls, being we have but two, a little dessent and neat, just to shew that one is no beggar after having served in such a good family so many years.

The lady, a little softened by this speech, which was made in almost a crying tone of voice, replied, Well, well, good Robin, I know how to make allowances; but do you and your wife learn for the future to make a more modest use of the means you are blessed with, and never encourage your girls to vanity and extravagance. Here's Mary here, Lennard's niece, whom I gave leave to be in the house (Monimia stood waiting all this time with the chocolate, which the old lady always swallowed as soon as she came in from her devotions), she, I assure you, comes of parents that many people would call genteel; and yet you see, as it has pleased Providence to make her a dependant and a servant, I never suffer her to stick herself out in feathers and flowers like a May-day girl.

The lecture ended, and the old coachman withdrew, extremely discontent that his Patty had been compared to the house-keeper's niece, who was, as he muttered to himself, a mere pauper; and Monimia was not at all flattered by being brought forward as a comparison for Miss Snelcraft, whom the servants, and particularly Betty, had been turning into ridicule for her awkward finery and

airs of consequence—nor did the expression, that she was born of parents whom some people would call genteel, at all sweeten the bitterness of this comparison. Monimia, who had before in the course of the day received a severe mortification from her aunt, in being refused leave to go to church, now, as soon as her service in waiting on Mrs. Rayland with the chocolate was performed, withdrew to her own room, and indulged her tears. At length she recollected that, though all the rest of the world might despise and contemn her, the heart of Orlando was hers; she was secure of his affection; he would repeat it to her at night, when he had promised to fetch her to his room: and these reflections dried her eyes, and dissipated her sorrows: they even lent her force to bear, without betraying her impatience, the intrusion of Betty Richards, who soon after asked leave to come in. Oh, laud! my dear miss, cried she, as soon as she entered the room, how we be shut up in this here old place like two little singing-birds in a cage! —I've been trying to persuade old Jenny to let me take her turn this a'ternoon to go to church, and have promised to give her two turns for one; but the cross old witch says indeed she chooses to go herself—Oh lud lud! I'd give a little finger to go.

And why are you so eager to go to-day, Betty, more than any other afternoon?

Oh gad! replied the girl, for five hundred reasons:—first, because it's so early that I could get away to West Wolverton church with all the ease in the world, and 'tis such a sweet afternoon, and winter will be here now soon; besides that—but you must not tell for an hundred pounds—my good old fat sweetheart brought me home last night the most beautifullest bonnet, such as the millener told him

was worn by the tip-top quality in Lonnon—and I die to wear it, and to go to West Wolverton church in it this very afternoon; for at ours, you know, I dares as well jump into the fire as put it on.

But why do your bonnet and your piety conspire to carry you so far just this very evening, Betty, said Monimia smiling, when both East Wolverton, and Bartonwick have an evening church, and are not much more than half as far?

Oh! thereby hangs a tale—What! you han't heard then, I suppose, of all the great doings at West Wolverton?

This was the name of the village in which was situated the house of Mr. Somerive.—Great doings! repeated Monimia, changing colour; no, I have heard of nothing.

Why then you must know, Miss, that Mr. Orlando, who was not here last night—

(Monimia knew it well, for they had agreed two nights before not to meet till the present evening)—

Mr. Orlando, I say, came over about an hour ago, just as my lady came from church, and after walking backwards and forwards in his melancholy fashion, with a book in his hand, upon the broad pavement in the chapel court, which really oft-times rives one's very heart to see him, he went away to his study. For my part, I was sitting in the window up stairs for a moment, for I had just been making up my lady's fire before she came from church—when all of a sudden I saw John Dickman, 'Squire Somerive's groom, come riding up; so down I went to speak to him. He gived me a letter, which I carried in to Orlando, who seemed monstrous surprised at it, as he was but that minute as 'twere come from home; and when I went back to the kitchen, John told me, he was ordered to wait for his

young master—for that Madam Somerive's brother, the London merchant, was come down, with some of his family, sons and daughters, and the gentleman from some part beyond sea, who was to marry the eldest Miss Somerive, for he had got his father's consent; and the wedding was to take place out of hand.—And so, added Betty, who had almost talked herself out of breath, and so, as Mr. Phil. is out, gone as he always is upon a visit to they new-comers up at Castle, the 'Squire he ordered John to fetch *our* Orlando out of hand home to entertain all this grand company.

And he went! said Monimia in a faint voice, who had changed colour a dozen times during this narration.

Oh, Lord! yes, to be sure he went, replied Betty; yet somehow he looked to me as if he had rather of stay'd; and hung about for some time, as thof unwilling to go. Lord! sir, said I, as I went to shut up his windows before he lock'd the study door—Lord, how strange it is that you are not like other young men, and never cares nothing for company and such like! He only sighed, a sweet creature!—when I'm sure, if all the grand lords and dukes, and even the King, and the Prince of Wales, and the Archbishop of Osnabig, and all his majesty's court, were to be collected together, there's not one of them to be compared to young 'Squire Orlando—Lord! what would I give to see all these gentlefolks together at West Wolverton church, and that dear sweet Orlando out-shining them all.

And that was the reason, said Monimia in a still fainter voice, that you are satisfied with no church but West Wolverton? But after all, Betty, pray are you sure these ladies and gentlemen will be there?

As sure as five pence—for John Dickman told

me so. Oh! that I could but go!—for Orlando, you know, Miss, who is the sweetest temper'd good-naturedst cretur in all England, would never tell if he saw one ever so smartly drest:—No, egollys! he's more like to give one some trifle or other to help one out, than to blab to get one anger.

Has he ever given you any thing, Betty?-said Monimia, in a voice, the tremor of which she could not disguise; for, mingled with numberless other sensations, something like a half-formed jealousy and suspicious apprehension now entered her heart —tell me, Betty, what has he ever given you?

Why, I assure you, replied the girl pertly, not above a month ago neither, after he had been here for almost a fortnight, he called me to him as I was a dusting of them there guns and arrows and what d'yecallums, as hangs over the chimney in that parlour as you goes through to get to his study—And so, says he, Betty, you've a good deal of trouble in cleaning of my room and making my fire, and perhaps your lady may not recollect it; and so may not make you a consideration for it; and therefore, Betty, I beg you'll accept this, and I wish I had it in my power to do better.—And if you'll believe me, Miss, it was a brand new crown, quite new, a crown piece they told me it was. I would have given any thing not to have changed it, but to have laid it up as a keepsake—but there!—I had not money enough without it to buy my new cotton gown, when Alexander Macgill the Scotchman called here; and so away went my poor dear crown, though I had leverer have parted with one of my fingers.

You did right, however, said Monimia coldly; the gown you wanted, and the crown, I dare say, Mr. Orlando meant you should use.

I suppose he did, a dear sweet creature!—Lord a

mercy!—what would I give to have a peep at his sweet face this afternoon! I'll tell you what, Miss, though you cannot go to church, nor I neither, we might ten to one see these gentlefolks ride by, if we could but steal up to the upper park, and so through the little common. 'Tis not much better than three miles, and we might not be miss'd.

No, said Monimia drily, I shall run no such risk indeed of making my aunt angry; and besides, what would Mr. Somerive, or Mr. Orlando, or any other of them think if they saw us there?

Hang their thoughts! replied Betty; what would it signify to us what any body thought, if we pleased ourselves? I'll go and see how the land lays, and if the two old girls have done their dinner, and are set down together to take their afternoon's dose.

Do not come back then, Betty, said Monimia; for I certainly will not go out without leave, and you know it's nonsense to ask it—therefore, if you like it, go; but I assure you I shall not.

Having thus released herself from her importunate visitor, Monimia sat down to consider all she had told her. That Orlando should quit the house without telling her, gave her at first extreme pain; yet a moment's reflection convinced her that, unless he had made a confidante of Betty, of which she now saw all the danger, there was no possible way of his conveying to her intelligence of the sudden summons he had received from his father; for Mrs. Lennard was at home, and had shut herself up in her own room to do twenty little services which she frequently chose to have performed on Sunday mornings. A thousand doubts now arose in the mind of Monimia, whether he would be able to call for her at night; a thousand apprehensions lest the people he was with, particularly his uncle's daughters, whom he had said were very pretty

women, should estrange his thoughts from her, and rob her of his affections. These fears were so acute, that she was trying to drive them from her, when Betty returned, and, finding the door of her room fastened, tapped softly at it, and cried Miss, Miss! who will refuse to go into the park now?

You have not surely got leave!

No, nor I have not asked it; but the old ladies are hard set in to their good things. Madam has had a gouty feel in her stomach all day, she says, and that's always a symptom for a double dose; and as to your aunt, she has been ailing too, and will not flinch her share, you know very well.

Monimia, alarmed at the loud whisper, had opened the door before the end of this speech, and let in her unwelcome companion, who now repeated, that every body was safely bestowed who could interrupt them; and that as it was still very early, they might have a good chance of seeing some of these comers, and above all Orlando, in their evening ride. But Monimia, who was displeased with the familiar way in which the girl named Orlando, and knew that he would object to her walking with her, assumed a virtue when she had it not; and though she believed they might safely go the way she proposed, and return before the hour when it was likely her aunt would want her! though she would have given half the world only for the chance of seeing Orlando at a distance, she positively refused—and had the resolution to see Betty set out by herself, with her new most beautifullest bonnet pinned under her petticoat, which she proposed putting on when she got clear of the house; and then Monimia, forcing her attention from what had the last few hours engaged it, sat down to the sort of lesson which Orlando had last marked for her, and which she had promised to make herself mis-

tress of before she saw him again;—though, alas! while she read, the idea of the superior advantages enjoyed by the Miss Woodfords, his cousins, their beauty, and the probability there was that one of them might be intended for him, too frequently distracted her thoughts, and impeded her good intentions.

CHAPTER VII.

The day had been unusually warm; but towards evening a thunder-storm came on, and, as it grew later, a tempest of wind, with heavy and continual rain.

Betty, sulky that Monimia refused, and still more sulky that she had got nothing by her long walk, but nearly spoiling all her finery, had not come to Monimia's room any more; but she received, at the usual hour, the usual summons for tea. She thought both Mrs. Lennard and her aunt uncommonly peevish and tedious, and that the sermon one was reading, while the other fell asleep, was most unreasonably long. At length she was dismissed, and, retiring to her turret, began to listen to the wind that howled in tremendous gusts among the trees, and to the rain falling in torrents, the rushing of which was redoubled by the leaden pipes that from the roof of her turret threw the water in columns on the pavement below. Would Orlando come? Through such a tempest it were hardly to be wished he should. Having been absent all day, there would be no fire in his room, he would be drenched with rain, and half-dead with cold. Monimia then could not desire he should come; yet she felt, in despite of her reason, that she should be very un-

happy if he did not; for though so many causes might combine to detain him, her humble ideas of herself, and the pictures she had made of the beauty and attractions of the Miss Woodfords, added another which rendered her wretched. Alas! cried she, Orlando among them will be too happy to think of me; and it is quite ridiculous to suppose that he will quit these ladies, to come through the storm almost five miles to poor Monimia. No, no! Orlando will not come.

Still however she could not determine to go to bed, at least till the hour was past for which he had made the appointment. At the usual time her aunt, who now frequently omitted to come herself, sent Betty for her candle, and her door was locked as usual, for that was a ceremony which either in person or proxy was always performed. But Monimia now no longer passed the long interval between half after nine o'clock and the hour when Orlando usually called her, in darkness; for he had furnished her with the means of procuring a light, and with small wax candles. One of these she now lit, and endeavoured to sit down to read—but the violence of the wind, which she fancied every moment increased, and the flashes of lightning which she saw through her narrow casement, to which there was no shutter, distracted her attention; and she could only sit in miserable anxiety, listening to the various noises which in such a tempestuous night are heard around an old building, and especially such a part of it as she inhabited; where, around the octagon tower or turret, the wind roared with violence from every point; while, in the long passages which led from thence to her aunt's apartments, it seemed yet more enraged, from being confined. She now traversed her small room with fearful steps; now sat down on her bed, near the

door, that she might the more readily hear Orlando if he should come; and now got on a chair, and opened her casement to observe if there seemed any probability of the storm's abating: but still, though the thunder had ceased, the clouds, driven against each other by violent and varying gusts of wind, produced vivid flashes of lightning, which suddenly illuminated the whole park. But Orlando came not, and it was now near an hour past his usual time. Again the poor anxious Monimia, now half despairing of his coming, and trying to persuade herself that she did not wish he should come, traversed her room—again went to her window. Another and another hour passed: amidst the heavy gusts and mournful howlings of the wind, she had counted the clock, that, with a more than usually hollow sound, told twelve, one, two—Orlando certainly did not mean to come—no! it was unreasonable to suppose he would; unreasonable to flatter herself that he would quit a cheerful circle of his relations, to traverse the extensive commons and lanes, and all the park, that lay between West Wolverton and the Hall in such a night, when no person would think of going out but on life and death. Yet, while she thus argued with herself, a few tears involuntarily stole from her eyes; and as she gave up all hopes of his coming, and lay down in her clothes on her bed (for she had not the resolution to undress herself), she sighed deeply, and said to herself: And yet, if it had been me who was expected, I do not believe any storm could have hindered me from trying to see Orlando! and I am sure no company would.—Yet he is quite in the right, I know, and I do not blame him.

She could not, however, fatigued and weary, close her eyes for some time. The clock at length

struck three; and soon after, wearied with watching and anxiety, she fell into unquiet repose.

Suddenly without being conscious how long she had indulged it, she started from her sleep, and fancied she heard the well-known signal: she listened a moment: it was repeated. Trembling with joy, yet equally agitated by fear, she arose and answered it: and removing the impediments that were between them, and again lighting her candle, Orlando stepped into the room.

His clothes and his hair were streaming with water, and he said hastily, as he came through the hangings, You had given me over, my Monimia, had you not?—Long ago, replied she, with an apprehensive countenance, which yet was lightened up with pleasure. And now I am come, Monimia, reassumed he, you must suffer me to remain here, for I cannot get into my own room: the chapel doors, you know, are fastened within side, and by the usual way at this hour of the night it is impossible. I can stay but a moment; but I could not bear to be so many hours without seeing you; and besides, I had no means of letting you know why I went so suddenly from hence, and I fear you have been unhappy.

I should have been unhappy indeed, if Betty, who heard it from the servant who came for you, had not told me as a piece of news, that company had arrived unexpectedly at West Wolverton.—And in such a night, Orlando, was it possible to expect you could leave them to come so far? How good it is of you!—And yet you will suffer, I fear, from your wet clothes. Good God! what can I do to prevent your suffering?

Be not uneasy about that, my angel friend, replied Orlando; such trifles I never attend to, and

never suffer from; if you will let me sit down here with you, I will take off my great coat, and my other clothes are not so very wet. At this hour there will surely be nothing to apprehend from my staying here.

I hope not, said Monimia, I hope not, if we speak low. The wind is so high, that any trifling noise could hardly be heard by my aunt if she were upon the watch, which I hope she is not. You are generous to indulge me, answered Orlando; and I must be a monster to dream of injuring such innocence and candour. But, Monimia, there are a thousand uneasy thoughts continually crowding upon me about you. This Betty Richards—I am afraid she is a bad girl; I am sure she is an artful one; and there is an alliance of some sort or other between her and the old butler: you will never trust her, Monimia?

Never indeed, replied Monimia; for though she is of late much thrown in my way since my aunt has become more indolent from her accident, I never willingly am with her; nor do I indeed like her so well as I used to do.

Continue to keep yourself then from much intimacy, Monimia; for the conversation of such a girl, to a mind pure and unsullied like yours, is to be dreaded. It is coarse, at least, if not vicious; and if it be not dangerous, is at all events improper. Discourage therefore her talking to you as much as you can, even about the tittle tattle of the house. Monimia most readily promised to obey him:—and then observing that he looked at her with a peculiar expression of uneasiness in his countenance, she said, But is that all, Orlando? Is there not something else that gives you concern? Yes, replied he; I will not conceal from you that there are many things. This wedding of my sister's, though I most

sincerely rejoice that she is likely to be happily settled, seems to teem with troubles for me.

Monimia turned pale, but only clasped her hands together as she sat by him, and did not interrupt him. He went on.

My uncle Woodford piques himself extremely upon having brought about this marriage ;—for the father of the young man (a merchant at Cork in very great business) for some time positively refused his consent, because of Philippa's want of fortune. My uncle, you know, or rather you do not know, is just the reverse of my mother, and is as bustling and spirited as she is mild and tranquil. Having got his money himself, he has no notion that any thing but money is worth thinking about, and that the money is best that is made in trade ; and therefore, as he has only one son, who does not choose to take up his business, but is studying at the Temple, he has adopted a notion, that it would be much better for me to go with him to London, and learn his business of a wine merchant, to which I may succeed.

And marry one of your cousins, said Monimia in a faint voice, who are, you have told me, such pretty women? If that is part of his plan, answered Orlando, my Monimia, he has kept it to himself.—But I do not believe it is, as one of them is engaged, and the other would not think me either smart enough or rich enough. Whatever may be Mr. Woodford's plan, however, that part of it will certainly never take effect ; nor indeed will any of it, for I feel a total disinclination to it.

Why then are you so distrest, Orlando, at the proposal?

Because I see it makes my father restless—not exactly the proposal, so much as the conversation my uncle has held with him.—He has been declaim-

ing against the folly of my dreaming away my time in waiting for a legacy from Mrs. Rayland; which after all, said he, the whimsical old woman may not give him—and what if she does? If she acts as she ought, the estate, you know, brother Somerive, ought to be your eldest son Phil's; and if she gives the rest of your family three or four thousand pounds each, what will that do for your youngest son? Why, not give him salt to his porridge.

Dear papa, said Maria, what an expression!—Well, well, child, answered my uncle, I can't stand to pick my words, when I am as anxious about a thing as I am about this—I say, and every man who knows the world will agree with me—I say, that a fine young fellow like my nephew here ought not to waste his life nailed to the gouty chair of a peevish old woman, who ten to one dies and bilks him at last. Let him be put into some way of doing for himself—every man who knows the world will agree with me—let him be put into some way of doing for himself; and then, if Mrs. Rayland has a mind to be a friend to him, take my word for it she'll do it so much the sooner. I'm sure of it, for I've remarked it in my dealings among mankind, and every man who knows the world will agree with me, that people are always more ready to help those who are in a way of doing well, than those that hang about helpless. If Orlando here was in a way of getting forward in the world, why you'd see that the old girl would be twice as kind to him—or, if she was not, why he need not so much care.

I found, continued Orlando, that this discourse, though my father did not perfectly assent to the justice of all its arguments, made a deep impression on his mind, which had long been disturbed by the difficulty of finding for me some proper line of con-

duct for my future establishment: and the determination is, that Mrs. Rayland is to be applied to for her opinion as to my sister's marriage, by way of compliment; and in regard to me, by way of sounding her intentions. It appears to me to be all very bad policy; and I foresee nothing but vexation, perhaps my removal from hence.

Orlando paused a moment; and Monimia, with a deep and tremulous sigh, repeated, From hence! —Alas! Orlando, I have foreseen that the happiness I have so little a while enjoyed of seeing you would not last long!

I know not, replied he, I may be too easily alarmed; but, with the bustle and fuss my uncle makes about every thing he pursues, he seldom fails of carrying his point; and he is now elated with his success over the prudent and worldly-minded Mr. Fitz-Owen, and believes his interposition would every where prove as infallible as it has done in hurrying up this marriage for Philippa.

Do you think it then too much hurried? said Monimia.

I hardly know, replied he, how to think it otherwise. Mr. Fitz-Owen is a very young man: he only saw Philippa half a dozen times when she was in town last spring with my uncle; and he has insisted upon this match with as much vehemence as he could have done had he known all her good qualities.

That, said Monimia, is a very grave reflection. If Philippa has the good qualities of which the gentleman is ignorant, the discovery that beauty is her least perfection will increase his happiness.

But what does she know of *him*, Monimia? What opportunity can she have had to judge of a man with whom she is engaged to pass her life?

Surely the acquaintance of a fortnight is very insufficient to form her judgment of a character on which the happiness of her whole life is to depend. Mr. Fitz-Owen may be a very good-tempered and worthy man; but, as he is the native of another country, it is impossible we should know whether he is or no. However, I keep all these reflections to myself; for the affair is settled, and my father seems pleased with it. Philippa too seems to become attached to Mr. Fitz-Owen. There is something very flattering to a young woman in the attention and perseverance he has shewn. He has a good person, and she really, I believe, likes him.

But you do not, Orlando?

I do not dislike him—I only wish I knew more of his temper; and I wish too that my bustling busy uncle had not contrived to connect my affairs with those of this wedding, and to hurry every thing with a precipitation that hardly gives one time to breathe. It was only on Thursday evening that Fitz-Owen arrived from Dublin with his father's consent: on Friday he delivered his credentials; and on Saturday the impetuous Mr. Woodford whirled him, with his own daughters and his officious self, down to us, where he pursues his plan with the same vehemence; for he has already settled with my father, that the letter to Mrs. Rayland is to be written to-morrow, and on Wednesday Philippa and Isabella, and, if Mrs. Rayland consents, I also, return with them to London, (Monimia shuddered, and checked an involuntary emotion she felt to implore Heaven aloud that Mrs. Rayland might be inexorably averse to this scheme), where, continued Orlando, the marriage is to take place as soon as the usual forms can be gone through.—Philippa is to set off to Ireland with her husband, and Isabella is to remain the winter with

the Woodfords; my uncle being sure, he says, of getting her married as well as he has done Philly.

Alas! Orlando, you will go then; for Mrs. Rayland, however she may dislike such a proposal, will not, I am afraid, oppose it; there is something so odd in her temper, that, though she is offended if her advice is not asked, she will seldom give it when it is, especially if she believes any other person has been consulted first.

I understand her perfectly, my Monimia, and I see nothing but vexation gathering for me in every quarter. Alas! it is not one of the least, that, while these people remain, my father expects me to stay at home; though, as my brother is so good as to promise to come hither to-morrow, I think I might be spared.

And has your brother, said Monimia, been consulted on this plan of your going into business with your uncle?

Oh, yes! It was opened to him after dinner, while I had left the room a moment to consider by what means I could get to you; and I found him eagerly promoting it for reasons which I heartily forgive, while I thank God I feel myself incapable of harbouring such sentiments towards him, could we change situations, I must follow my destiny, Monimia, whatever it may be; for I must not make my poor father, and still less my mother, unhappy. They have too many uneasy hours about Philip; and while the marriage of Philippa gives them some satisfaction, it shall not be embittered by any opposition of mine to what they may think right for me—and yet I own, Monimia, I own, that to go with Mr. Woodford, to be confined to that sort of business, would make me most completely wretched. He said this in a tone of voice so expressive of despondence, that Monimia, op-

pressed as she was before, could conceal the anguish she felt no longer. Still, however, she tried to check the excess of her sorrow, while he tenderly soothed her, assuring her that, whatever might be his fate, he should love her to the end of his life; and if he thought that the drudgery of a few years at any business, however irksome to him, would enable him to pass the rest of his life in moderate competence with her, he would submit to it, not only as a duty, but as a blessing. And now, my Monimia, let us consider how we can meet to-morrow night—by that time something may more decidedly be known. I will come then early in the morning, before this letter, of which I dread the event, is sent; and, under pretence of enquiring how Mrs. Rayland does, and then of going into the study for some of my clothes, which I often leave there, I can open the chapel door, and prepare every thing for our going to the study the next evening; for to live without seeing you, Monimia, is impossible, and I fear to meet here often might be too hazardous.

It would indeed, replied Monimia, and even now I have been in misery the whole time—Yet it was so late, Orlando, before you came!

It was two o'clock before I could leave the company; for my uncle is a man who loves to sit long over his wine, to tell what he thinks good stories, and call for toasts and songs, suffering nobody to quit the room as long as they can distinguish the glass from the candle. My father, very little used to this sort of conviviality, was tired, and left us to manage him as we could.—My brother would have remained with him till now, I dare say, most willingly; but he had promised to be at Stockton's, with whom he now almost entirely lives, to a great hunting party this morning; and he dashed through

the rain about one o'clock. Fitz-Owen got extremely drunk, and was extremely noisy; and I found there was no way for me to escape but by feigning to be in the same situation; by which stratagem I was at length released; and flew, Monimia, with impatience to thee, dear source of all the happiness I have, or ever hope to have, on earth!

It was now so near the dawn of day, that Monimia besought him to consider the danger there was, if he staid longer, of being observed in his departure by the labourers coming to their work. Orlando owned there was something to fear, yet felt unusually reluctant to go, and lingered till the break of day was very visible through the casement. He then tore himself away, and escaped from the turret without observation; but in crossing the park he was seen at a distance by the footman, who was up, on some scheme of his own. As great rewards were offered for the detection of poachers, and the fellow concluded Orlando to be one, he hastily called one of the grooms; and they went round together to another part of the park, by which they thought this intruder must pass; and, as Orlando was mounting the stile, he was amazed to find himself suddenly collared by one man, and rudely seized by the arm by another. His uncommon strength and activity enabled him to disengage himself instantly from both. They as instantly discovered their mistake, and with a thousand apologies returned to the house: but this unlucky rencounter was afterwards talked of in the family; and though the conjectures to which it gave rise were remote from the truth, they yet failed not to disturb the tranquillity of the young lovers.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Somerive, after many debates with himself, and many consultations with his wife, at length, determined to write to Mrs. Rayland: it was indeed necessary to pay her the compliment of consulting her on the marriage of his daughter; and he thought it not an improper opportunity to try what were her intentions in regard to Orlando, by hinting that an occasion now offered to establish him advantageously in trade.

The arguments of Mr. Woodford had not on this point so much influence as to prevent his fearing the experiment he was about to make; but the conduct of his eldest son, which nothing could restrain, made him look forward with fear to the future. He found his own health very much injured, by the uneasiness he had lately undergone; and he knew that should he die, the only dependance of his wife and his unmarried daughters must be on Orlando, and on the friendship of Woodford. To put his son therefore into business with his wife's brother was certainly a very desirable plan, if Mrs. Rayland did not intend better to provide for him; and it was certainly time to know whether she had or had not any such intentions in his favour.

The letter then which Orlando so dreaded, was written, after great precautions in choosing the words. It requested her approbation of his eldest daughter's marriage with Mr. Fitz-Owen the only son of an eminent merchant at Cork; and said, that as Orlando was now of an age in which it became necessary to think of his future establishment, thoughts were entertained of putting him into business with his uncle; but that nothing

would be concluded upon without the entire approbation of Mrs. Rayland, to whose notice and protection he was so much obliged.

A servant was sent with this letter about noon. It was received and read in due form, and a verbal message returned, that Mrs. Rayland would at her leisure write an answer, and send one of her own servants with it.

On this occasion Mrs. Rayland talked to Lennard —not to consult her, for it was an affair in which she thought herself alone competent to judge—but to give vent to her spleen, and to express her dislike of all people in trade, and particularly of poor Mrs. Somerive. Those vulgar mundungus folks, said she, will not suffer the family to better by their chance connection with a gentleman— Let them marry their girls, if they will, to dealers and chapmen; I shall never interfere: they are all like the mother, and may make good tradesmen's wives; though, if Mr. Somerive had not, like his foolish father, had a low taste, his daughters might have married men of family, who would have been proud to be allied, though distantly, to ours. As it is, they must carry their cherry cheeks to a lower market—*I* shall never oppose it. But for Orlando, there was something of an air of good blood about him, that almost made me doubt at times his birth by his mother's side. However, if he gets these buying and selling notions in his head, and chooses his mother's low origin should continue to be remembered, I have done. I suppose he's got among them—a fine flashy set of trades-folks—and enters into their amusements and views; and if so, *I* shall never disturb him, let him go his own way; only I shall not choose to have a shopkeeper an inmate at Rayland Hall.

Monimia, who was called down a moment before

to assist in cutting out linen, was present during this harangue, for they considered her as a mere cypher. She found herself terribly affected by the opening of it; but when it proceeded to speak of Orlando, she measured four times instead of two, notched a piece of Irish linen in the wrong place, and was beginning to use her scissars the wrong way, when a severe look from Mrs. Lennard, who snatched it out of her hand, with, What are you about, mope? restored her to her recollection. She begged pardon; and another look from her aunt bade her beware that she did not offend a second time—when Mrs. Rayland thus went on:

After a taste for *such* company, this place must be very dull: drinking and jollity, I suppose, are soon learned. And so Mr. Orlando has not been here these two days! Mighty well: he is his own master —Lennard! he has not called this morning, has he?

Monimia, by a glance of her eye, saw him at that moment pensively and dejectedly crossing the park on foot. She dared not however say so; but finding herself quite unequal to the misery of being present at an interview, in which she foresaw that, in consequence of this fatal letter, he would be forbidden the house, and seeing that her aunt determined she *should* stay, she hung her foot as if by accident in the long roll of linen that was on the ground, and, in pretending to disengage it, fell with some violence against an old heavy gilt leather skreen that went across one side of the large room, and ran the sharp-pointed scissars with which she was cutting the linen into her arm a little above the wrist.

Her aunt, however, did not perceive it, till the blood streamed from her arm, round which, without any complaint, she wrapped her handkerchief. The paleness and faintness, which she could not disguise, were accounted for when Mrs. Lennard saw the

handkerchief bathed in blood. Monimia, who was actually sinking to the earth, though not from the wound, was then dismissed, while Betty was called to take care of the careless girl, and ordered to put some Friar's balsam to the cut; and she just tottered out of one door as Orlando, after sending up for permission, entered at the other. This was fortunate; for, had he beheld her in such a situation, and had she at that moment seen him, their intelligence could hardly have been concealed. The looks Mrs. Lennard had cast on her, when she first appeared confused, had impressed her with terror, and, she fancied, menaced all that was dreadful. With difficulty, and leaning on Betty's arm, she reached her turret; where, under pretence that the accident of having hurt her arm had turned her sick, she begged a glass of water, and lay down, being otherwise unable to conceal from Betty the agitation of her spirit, and the terror she was in for the reception of Orlando.

Mrs. Rayland, instead of the kindness she was used to shew him, now received him with the most cold and repulsive formality. Your servant, Mr. Orlando—please to take a chair, was all she said; and in the manner of her saying it, Orlando saw abundant cause to fear that his father's letter had undone him with Mrs. Rayland.

I find we are to lose you, Sir!——you are going to turn merchant, or shopkeeper!

Not, madam, replied Orlando, if you think my doing so a wrong measure.

Oh! Sir, I never pretend to dictate. Every one knows their own affairs best; and by all means *you* ought to follow your father's orders and your own inclinations.

Alas, dear Madam! replied Orlando, with a sort of spirited humility that well became him, my

father's orders would, I believe, in this case be given with reluctance; and though *I* should obey them, it would be with reluctance indeed!

What, Sir! (relaxing a little of her vinegar aspect) is it not your own desire then that you should be put apprentice or journeyman to this person, this brother of your mother's? I thought, for my part, that finding perhaps, like your brother and other gay young men, that the country was very dull, you chose probably to figure in London; for it is trades-people now that can best afford to shew away, as witness the new comers at poor Lord Carloraine's fine place—those what dy'e callums——they were trades-people—yet nobody can attempt to live as they do. If such things can be done by trade, no wonder young men are eager to begin. The Hall, Mr. Orlando, must be a dull place when once you have got these fine doings in your head.

Madam, said Orlando, trembling, for he now found that his fate depended on the event of this dialogue—Madam, I have always avoided the meanness of adulation, nor will I use it now; you ought to despise me if I did; and I know you have generosity enough to have bestowed all the favours I have received from you, without expecting me to sacrifice my integrity or my freedom.

Mrs. Rayland did not very clearly comprehend this sentence. It was partly complimentary, and therefore to her taste; but the words *sacrifice* and *freedom*, at the end, on which a strong emphasis was laid, sounded a little like rebellion. She therefore screwed up her visage to its former asperity, and answered: No indeed, Sir, *I* expect no sacrifices from any body; and as to freedom—every body is free to do as they like best in their own affairs, as I told you before.

You will not then, Madam, suspect me of mean-

ness unworthy equally of my respect for you and what I owe myself, if I declare to you, that I have no wish to enter into trade, for which I am very certain I have no talents; and that, though I must obey my father if he insists upon it, yet I shall be very unhappy, and had rather, infinitely rather, if you will have the goodness to permit it, remain at home, with the advantage of being allowed sometimes, in paying my respects to you, to have, as I have had for some months, the use of your library; where I hope I am qualifying myself for one of the liberal professions against the time when my father can find an opportunity to place me in one: and in the mean time, I call God to witness, that, to associate with such people as Mr. Stockton, or to emulate his splendour, is so far from being my wish, that to be compelled to do it would be the greatest punishment that could be inflicted upon me.

I believe, cousin Orlando, I believe—and I am pleased to see it—you have some understanding: and indeed, young man, I think too well of you to wish to see you a tradesman. Cousin Orlando, were, he well knew, words that always portended good-humour, and were never used but on days of high favour. They now sounded most soothingly in the ears of Orlando. Will you then, Madam, be so very good, when you take the trouble to answer my father's letter, to express your sentinents on this matter? and I am sure he will then press it no farther.

I shall tell him, child, replied she, that I think you may do better; and for the present, as you are not idle, that you may go on with your studies at the Hall.

Orlando, in raptures at having carried his point, thanked his venerable cousin a thousand times. He never thought her so reasonable before: she never

fancied him so much like her grandfather Sir Orlando; and so many civilities passed between them, that, before they parted, she gave him a bank-note of ten pounds, and he was admitted to the honour of kissing her hands. In this excellent humour, which Mrs. Lennard did not discourage, he left her, went into the study to secure his admittance in the evening, and to recover himself of the extreme perturbation he was in, before he returned to the party with whom he was to dine at home.

Mrs. Rayland then having called for her writing materials, which seldom saw the sun, and being placed in form at her rose-wood writing-box, lined with green velvet and mounted in silver, produced, at the end of four hours, the following letter, piquing herself on spelling as her father spelt, and disdaining those idle novelties by which a few superfluous letters are saved.

Raylande Hall, 12th day of
September, A. D. 1776.

Sir, my kinsman,

I have received youre letter, and am oblidged by your taking the troubbel to informe me of youre famely affairs, to the wich I am a sinceer goode wisher. In respecte to youre daughter Philippa must begge to be excused from giving my opinion, not haveing the pleasure to knowe the gentleman, and being from my retired life no judge of the personnes charactere, who are remote and in bisness, as I understande this personne is; wherefore I can onleye thereupon saie, that doubtlesse you, being as you are a goode and carefulle father, will take due care and precaution that youre daughtere shall not, by her marriage, be exposed to the mischances of becoming reduced by bankruptcies and other accidents, whereby peopel in trade are oft times grate sufferers—But your care herein for your

daughter's securitye is not to be questionned. Furthermore, respecting youre youngest sonne, Mr. Orlando, he is very certainelye at youre disposal also, and you are, it may be, the most competent judge of that which is fitting to bee done for his future goode and advantage. I wish him very well; he seeming to me to be a sober, promising, and well conditioned youthe; and such a one as, were I his neerer relation, I shoulde thinke a pitye to put to a trade. I am at present alwaies glad of his companie at the Hall, and willinge to give anye littel encouragement to his desier of learninge in the liberal sciences fitting for a gentleman, the wich his entring on a shoppe or warehouse would destroye and put an ende to. However that may bee, I saie again, that you, being his father, are to be sure the propperest personne to determine for him, and he is dutiefullie inclined, and willinge to obey you. Yet by the discourse I have had with him thereuponne, it doth not appeare that the youthe himself is inclined to become a dealer, as you purpose.

Heartilie recommending you in my prayers to the Disposer of all goode giftes, and hoping he will directe you in all thinges for the well-doing of your famely, I remaine,

Sir, my kinsman,
youre well-wisher
and humbel servant,
GRACE RAYLANDE.

This letter was received at Wolverton while Mr. Somerive, his two sons, Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen were yet over their wine. The anxious father opened it with a palpitating heart, nor were the younger part of the audience less solicitous to know its contents. As there were none of them towards whom secrecy was absolutely necessary,

though it might have been more prudent, Mr. Somerive, at the request of his eldest son, put it across the table to him—who, with that thoughtless indiscretion which marked his character, read it aloud, with comments serving to turn into ridicule the writer, and the sentiments it contained. The description of Orlando—under that of a sober, promising, and well-conditioned youth—was read with a burst of laughter; while the slighting way in which trade was mentioned, and the contempt thrown on shopkeepers, under which Mrs. Rayland seemed to describe wine-merchants and every person in business, raised the indignation of Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen, who both agreed in declaring that the opinion of such an old crone was not worth consulting; that she was in a perfect dotage, as well from pride as old age; and that it was a condescension in Mr. Somerive to have consulted her at all. Orlando, however, saw all this with concern mingled with joy. He was pretty sure, from the countenance of his father, which he solicitously watched as he perused the letter, that the part of it which related to himself was kinder than he expected; that it had turned the fluctuating and undecided opinion of his father in his favour; and that he should not now, by being sent with his uncle Woodford, be condemned to the double misery of quitting Monimia, and associating with persons whose manners and ideas were so different from his own, that it was a perpetual punishment to him to be in their company. The displeasure of his brother at the partiality Mrs. Rayland expressed for him was easily accounted for; and Orlando had long accustomed himself to bear his rough jokes, and even his sarcastic reproaches, which he vented whenever they met, without much uneasiness.

As soon as Mr. Somerive could disengage himself

from his company, he withdrew to consult with his wife on the purport of Mrs. Rayland's letter, and made a sign to Orlando to follow him in a few moments.—He did so, and found his father and mother in consultation in the garden. The mother, whose heart was half broken at the idea of parting with her daughter so suddenly, was weeping with joy to find that Orlando would not yet leave her: flattering herself, from the purport of the letter, that the affluent fortune of Mrs. Rayland would at last centre with Orlando, and putting the most favourable construction on every expression that related to him, she agreed with Mr. Somerive, that nothing would be so imprudent as to think of removing him; and it was even determined, that Mr. Somerive should that evening write to her again, thanking her for her advice about his daughter, and leaving the future fate of Orlando wholly to her disposal; that Orlando should himself carry the letter, and ask leave to take his former apartments for some time—only returning once again to Wolverton to take leave of his eldest sister, whom he was to see no more before she went to Ireland—and of his second sister Isabella, who was to accompany her to London, and to pass some time with her uncle and aunt Woodford.

Never did Orlando obey his father with more alacrity than on this occasion; and on his return Mrs. Rayland never received him more kindly. He was now again invited to partake of her supper: without putting much force on himself, he shewed her exactly that sort of attention which was the most agreeable to her, and appeared grateful without being servile. At length he was dismissed; and, when the house was perfectly quiet, he flew to Monimia, who accompanied him to the study; and when he related how much more happily the events

of the day had passed than he had at its beginning expected, she shed tears of delight; and the sweet sensations of hope, which they now dared to indulge more than there ever yet appeared reason to indulge them, made this one of the happiest evenings they had ever passed together.

The following day Orlando returned to the house of his father, and found that, in regard to some parts of his family, a new arrangement had taken place. Mrs. Somerive, as the hour approached for her two eldest daughters to leave her—one to be separated from her perhaps for years, and to enter into another family—found herself so much affected, that her husband, who was very indulgent to her, agreed she should accompany the party to London, be present at the wedding of her daughter, and return in a fornight, bringing Isabella back with her, if the idea of leaving her was at the end of that time uneasy to her. This being settled, Orlando took leave of his mother and sisters that evening: the former rejoicing that he would remain in the country; and the latter, but particularly the eldest, lamenting their separation with many tears: for Orlando, who was tenderly attentive to his sisters, was fondly beloved by them all; though to Selina, the third, who was a year younger than himself, he was more attached than to the rest.

Pensively he returned back to the hall after this melancholy parting: it was the first time the family had been thus separated; for, except the unhappy eccentricities of his eldest son, the union of Mr. Somerive's children, and the promise they all gave of excellence, had hitherto made him amends for much of the difficulty he found in supporting them. But Orlando saw that the hour was now come when his father felt equal pain for the fate of those who were about to be what is called esta-

blished in the world, and for those whom he knew not how to establish, or, in case of his death, to provide for. All that filial tenderness and good sense could suggest to his ingenuous and generous mind, he said to console his father; but with infinite concern he observed, that the wounds inflicted by the profligacy of his brother festered more deeply every day, and that all he could do had too little power to assuage the constant pain arising from this source; from which, though his father d d not complain, Orlando thought it but too evident that his health was gradually impaired.

Against the uneasiness these observations gave him he found the only respite in his books, to which he assiduously applied himself—and in his evening conferences with Monimia, who every hour became more dear to him, and whose personal charms seemed every hour heightened by the progress of her understanding. As the nights became longer, and more obscure, they met earlier, and with less apprehension of detection; and as Mrs. Lennard seemed to become more and more remiss in her office of duenna, the opportunities they had of seeing each other in the course of the day (though they rarely ventured to hold any conversation) sweetened the tedious hours between their meetings.

Thus almost a fortnight passed after the departure of Mrs. Somerive and her daughters for London; Orlando remaining constantly at the Hall, except dining occasionally with his father, or riding over in a morning to enquire after him, Mrs. Rayland seeming every day more fond of his company; and every body about the house, even the old servants, who had hitherto had such an ascendancy, appearing to consider him as the future master of the domain, where he was now invested with powers he had never before enjoyed. The gamekeeper was

ordered to suffer no other person to have the liberty of shooting on the extensive manors, and Mrs. Rayland was pleased when the game that was brought to her table was killed by Orlando; while, whatever diminution of consequence the confidential servants might suffer by this growing fondness of their mistress for him, their was something in his manner so fascinating, that their jealousy and anger were insensibly converted into attachment; and all, even the austere Mrs. Lennard herself, seemed to wish him well; except Mr. Pattenson, who, in proportion as he became in favour with others, appeared to dislike him.—Orlando had some time before remarked his rudeness, and often fancied that he watched him, and had some suspicion of his evening conversations with Monimia—yet if he had, it was more likely he would speak of what he knew, than secretly resent what he had in fact nothing to do with: but some resentment he appeared to harbour; and, whenever he met Orlando, surveyed him with looks which expressed anger, scorn, and apprehension. Orlando, conscious of never having injured him, and fearful only in one point, endeavoured to guard against any mischief he could do by discovering his evening visits to the turret, or those of Monimia to the library; and, for the rest, despised his wrath too much to attempt appeasing or resenting it.

Mrs. Lennard, to whom the constant residence of Orlando at the Hall might be supposed to be disagreeable, was much more civil to him, now that he was a fine young man, than ever she had been during his childhood; to her he was always extremely obliging; and though he disdained to stoop to the meanness of flattering Mrs. Rayland, where money might be supposed to be his sole object, he did not think it equally unworthy to use a little art

to promote the interest of his love. Mrs. Lennard was remarkably open to two sorts of adulation—She loved to be thought a woman of sense, and to hear how fine her person must have been in her younger days. She was even now accustomed to say, that though not so well to *meet*, she was still well to *follow*; for she fancied her tall perpendicular figure exhibited still a great deal of dignity and grace. These foibles were so evident, and, whenever she was not with Mrs. Rayland, she took so little pains to conceal them, that Orlando, who thought it too probable that on her the future happiness of his life depended, believed it not wrong to take advantage of them to acquire her favour; and he succeeded so well by adroitly administering now and then a little well-timed flattery, that Mrs. Lennard not only held him in high esteem, but endeavoured to secure his, by cultivating the graces he had remarked. She entered on a new course of reading, and a little modernised her appearance. To have made too many and too rapid improvements in the latter respect, would have been attended with the hazard of displeasing Mrs. Rayland; her's therefore were confined to that sort of emendations which she was not likely to perceive.

It happened that, in the progress of these refinements, Mrs. Lennard had occasion for some articles which Betty Richards (who was a very great favourite, from the assiduity which she affected in her service particularly) was commissioned to buy. The place she was to go to was rather a large village than a town, and was about three miles and a half from the Hall; the way to it leading partly through the park, and partly through some hanging woods and coppices which belonged to Mrs. Rayland. Monimia happened to be in the room when Mrs. Lennard was giving Betty this commission for

the next morning; and as her aunt had promised her a few articles for herself, for which she had immediate occasion, she ventured to solicit leave to go with Betty to make these purchases. Dear Madam, said she, do indulge me this once. I have hardly been out of the park twice in my life; and though I have no desire to go any where when you disapprove of it, surely there can be no harm in my walking to such a place with Betty, just to buy what you are so good as to allow me. We shall not be gone above two hours and a half, for I will go as early as you please in the morning.

Mrs. Lennard, who happened to be in a better humour than usual when this request was made, agreed to it, under some restrictions. She said, that if Monimia *did* go, she must be back by nine o'clock at the very latest, and not go into any house but that of the universal dealer with whom her business was; that she must make no acquaintance, and enter into conversation with nobody. To all this Monimia most willingly agreed; and she believed that Orlando, whom she determined to consult in the evening, would not object to her going, on such an occasion, so little a way, whatever dislike he had to her associating much with Betty.

To Orlando, therefore, she communicated her design as soon as they met, who did not seem much pleased with it; but, to a matter apparently so trifling, he was ashamed of making any serious opposition, when she said that she really wanted the articles her aunt had given her leave to buy, which no other opportunity might afford her. He therefore, after expressing his hopes that she would continue upon her guard against Betty, whom he told her he saw more and more cause to mistrust and dislike, consented to the little expedition she me-

ditated, and directed her the nearest way through the woods and the preserved pheasant-grounds of Mrs. Rayland. I shall be out with my gun to-morrow, said he; but I suppose I must not venture to meet you as if it were by chance?

I think, answered Monimia, you had better not. Were we to meet, it would perhaps look like design; and as we could not venture to enter into conversation, it is hardly worth the risk of Betty's talking about it, since we should only just pass each other in the woods.

I believe, replied Orlando, it will be better not; especially as I told Mrs. Rayland at dinner yesterday, and while your aunt was present, that I should walk with my gun to my father's, and try round his lands for some game to send up to my mother and sister.

Mrs. Lennard had probably recollected this circumstance when she so easily gave Monimia the permission she asked, her walk lying quite on the opposite side of the country. It was agreed, therefore, that Orlando should not incur any suspicion of a correspondence between them, by changing his plan for the next day; and after that was settled, Orlando read to her a letter he had that day received from his mother. It related to the marriage of Phillipa, and her immediate departure for Ireland—described the state of her own mind on bidding adieu to her daughter—and said, that Mr. Woodford had insisted on her staying another week in town to recover her spirits; which however she should rather do to indulge Isabella, who had never been in town before, with the sight of the playhouses and other public places; for that *her* own spirits would be infinitely more relieved by collecting around her the rest of her children. But, added she, while a tear had blistered the paper where the

sentence was written, why do I thus fondly flatter myself, and forget that your brother, my Orlando, is almost a stranger to us, and is, I much fear, by his thoughtless conduct, slowly destroying the invaluable life of your dear father? Alas! while I remember this, I know not how I should support myself if I did not find comfort in thinking of you.

Orlando's tears, while he read this letter, fell where the paper was marked by those of this beloved parent. The delightful visions he had been indulging but the moment before, disappeared; and he hardly dare think of Monimia, if it must be at the expense of wounding the peace and destroying the hopes of his parents. One look, however, from her, the sound of her voice as she soothingly spoke of his mother, dissipated these mournful thoughts; and, as he led her to her turret, he fancied that, if his mother could see her, she would love her as much as he did, and be happy to add to the family she wished to collect around her, so amiable and interesting a creature.

CHAPTER IX.

Early on the following morning, Monimia, awaking from her short repose, prepared herself for her little journey, which, unused as she was to go farther than about the park, or in the walled gardens, was to her an event of some importance. The best dress she had was a white gown, which she put on to make her appearance in the village, with a little straw hat tied under her chin with blue ribband. Her fine hair, which she had never attempted to distort with irons, or change by powder, was arranged only by the hands of nature; and a black

gauze handkerchief, which her aunt had given her from her own wardrobe, was tied over her shoulders. Nothing could be more simple than her whole appearance; but nothing could conceal the beautiful symmetry of her figure, or lessen the grace which accompanied her motions. Her companion Betty, as eager as she was for the walk, entered her room before she was quite ready, dressed in all the finery she dared shew at home, while she reserved her most splendid ornaments to put on at the park-stile, and to be restored to her pocket at the same place on their return.

It was a clear morning in the middle of October when they set out. They happily executed their commissions; but Betty had so much to say, so many things to look at, and so many wishes for the pretty things she saw—and the man and his wife, who kept the shop, were so glad to see the *ladies*, as they called them both, and so willing to shew all the newest things from the next provincial town, as very fashionable, and pressed them so earnestly to go into their parlour, and eat some cake and drink some of their currant wine, that Betty had quite forgot Mrs. Lennard's injunction to return at nine o'clock: nor could the repeated remonstrances of Monimia prevail upon her to leave the house till the clock struck eleven. Monimia, very much alarmed, and fearing that her aunt would, in consequence of this disobedience, never allow her to go out again, then prevailed upon her companion to set out; and to save as much time as they could they walked as fast as possible up the path which led from the village, through a copse that clothed the steep aclivity of a hill, which, at the end of about three quarters of a mile, led to Mrs. Rayland's woods. They passed with equal speed through the first of these woods, the path still ascending;

but when they came to the second, Monimia, from unusual exertion, from the heat (for the sun had yet great power and force), and the apprehensions of her aunt's anger, was quite exhausted, and begged Betty to let her rest a moment on the steps of the stile; to which she, who feared Mrs. Lennard's displeasure much less than Monimia, readily assented.

Lord, Miss, cried she, as they sat down, how frighted you be at nothing! Why, what can your aunt do, child? She can't kill you; and as for a few angry words, I've no notion of minding 'em, not I: 'tis hard indeed if one's to be always a slave, and never dares to stir ever so little;—one might as well be a negur.

I would not for the world, answered Monimia, offend my aunt when she is kind to me; and it was very good in her to give me money to buy these things, and to let me go for them.

I see no mighty matter of goodness in it, cried the other: who is to provide for you, if she does not, who is your own natural relation? Egollys! Miss, if I was you, I should be very apt to shew her the difference. Why, very often she uses you like a dog, and I'm sure she makes you work like a servant. There's Mr. Pattenson always a-telling me that handsome girls have no occasion to be drudges as I be, or as I have been; for that in London they may make their fortunes, and live like the finest ladies of the land.—Thus she ran on, while Monimia, hardly hearing, and not at all attending to her conversation, sat silent, considering how extraordinary Orlando would think it, if by any accident he should know she was out so long—and trying to recover her breath that they might proceed—when suddenly several spaniels ran out of the wood, a pheasant flew up near them, and the report of two guns was heard so near that Monimia started in some

degree of terror, while Betty, whose nerves were much stronger, clapped her hands, and, laughing aloud, cried: Oh jingo! if here ben't some gentlemen shooting—let's stay and see who they be!

No, no! said Monimia, let us go.

She then arose to walk on; but the voices of the persons who were shooting were now heard immediately before them, and she turned pale when she thought she distinguished that of Orlando. Instantaneously, however, the sportsmen broke out of the thick underwood into the path before them, and Monimia beheld a young man, whom, from his distant resemblance to Orlando, she immediately knew to be his elder brother. With him were two other gentlemen, and a servant who carried their nets. Oh ho! cried the elder Somerive; what have we here! two cursed pretty wenches—hey, Stockton? Here's a brace of birds that it may be worth while to mark, damme! He then approached Monimia, who shrunk back terrified behind her companion; while Betty, far from feeling any apprehension, advanced with a curtsey and a giggle, and Pray, Sir, let us pass.

Not so quickly, my little dear, said Mr. Stockton; I am a new comer into this country, and have a great inclination to be acquainted with all my pretty neighbours—By Heaven, you are as handsome as an angel—Pray, my dear, where do you live?

With Mrs. Rayland, Sir, said Betty, dropping another curtsey; and I beg your honour will not stop us, for my lady will be very angry.

Damn her anger, cried Stockton; does she think to shut up all the beauty in the country in her old fortification? If she's angry, you pretty little rogue, leave her to vent it on her jolly favourite butler, that fellow who looks like the confessor to the convent, and do you come to me—I keep open house

for the reception of all pretty damsels in distress—and bring your companion here with you.

He then looked forward towards Monimia, and saw her in an agony of tears; for the conversation of Philip Somerive and his companion, to whom he gave the title of Sir John, had terrified her so much that she could no longer command herself.—Why, what the devil's the matter? cried Stockton. Why, Sir John—why, Somerive, what have you said to that sweet girl?

We've been asking her who she is, replied Sir John; and it seems she does not know.

You are the housekeeper's niece, are you not? said Somerive.

Tell me, my dear, addressing himself to Betty, is not this little simpleton, that falls a-crying so prettily, the reputed niece of that old formal piece of hypocrisy, Lennard? Come, tell us—you have more sense than to cry because one asks a civil question.

Lord, Sir, replied Betty, to be sure you are such another wild gentleman that I don't at all wonder you've frighted our miss, who, poor thing! has scarcely ever been out of our house all her life.—Yes, Sir, 'tis Miss Monimee, Sir, Madam Lennard's kinswoman; and I hope, Sir, you'll please to give us leave to pass, for we shall have a deal of anger for being out so much longer than Madam Lennard she gived us leave to stay.

Tell us then, said Sir John, taking both Monimia's hands, which she in vain endeavoured to disengage from his grasp—tell us where and when we can see you again, and then you shall go.—Yes, cried Stockton, addressing himself to Betty, tell us, my dear girl, when can we see you again? We shall not easily relinquish the acquaintance, interrupted Somerive; and if you are to be met with only at the Hall, I shall contrive to get into favour again

with that immortal old frump, and I can tell you that's no small compliment.

Oh! dear, sir, giggled Betty, I vow and declare you put me all in a twitter with your wild ways. Indeed, sir, you can't see us no where; for, as to miss, she never goes out, not at all.— For my share, to be sure, I now and tan be at church, and such like; but for all that, it's morrally impossible for us to see you nohow at all.

Well then, cried Stockton, we'll have a kiss a-piece somehow at all, now we do see you.

Yes, yes, said Somerive, that we will.

Well, gentlemen, replied Betty, I am sure this is very rude behaviour (Lord, miss, why d'ye cry so? I warrant they won't do no harm); and if you insist upon it, I hope you'll let us go then.

Yes, answered Somerive, we'll let you go then.

Betty went through the ceremony without making many difficulties; but when Stockton advanced towards Monimia, to whom Sir John had all this time been making professions of violent love, she retreated from him; and her alarm was so evidently unaffected that Sir John stopped him.—Don't, Stockton, cried he; miss is apparently very new to the world, and we have distressed her. Well, well, answered Stockton, we won't distress her then. Come, Somerive, we shall meet these charming girls some other time; I see you are taking care of that, (for he continued whispering Betty,) so let us now go on to beat the wood. Somerive, who seemed to have made, during his momentary conversation, some arrangement with Betty, now agreed to this; and, as he passed Monimia, looked earnestly under her hat, and said in a half whisper, Upon my honour! that sober well-conditioned young man, Mr. Orlando, has a fine time of it; these are his studies at the Hall!—Poor Mo-

nimia, sinking with terror and confusion, now endeavoured to disengage herself from Sir John, and to follow Betty, who, making more half-curtseys, and looking smilingly after the gentlemen, was walking on; but he who had attached himself to Monimia, was not so easily shaken off. He told Stockton and Somerive, that he should go home another way, and should shoot no more. Good morrow, therefore, added he, I shall wait upon these ladies through the woods; and as you do not want Ned (speaking of his servant,) he may as well go with me and take home the birds. To this the other two assenting, departed; while Sir John, giving his servant a hint to enter into conversation with Betty, and discover as much as he could relative to Monimia, again joined her, though she had walked forward as quickly as possible, and desired her, as he said she seemed tired, to accept of his arm. Monimia, more terrified every step she took, and dreading lest he should insist upon following her to the Hall, now acquired courage to entreat that he would leave her; while he, regardless of the distress so evident in her countenance, endeavoured to prevail upon her to listen to him; and in this manner they had proceeded nearly to the part of the woods which open directly into the park, when suddenly, at a sharp turn of the path, Orlando, with his gun upon his shoulder, stood before them.

Amazement and indignation were pictured in his countenance when he beheld a stranger walking close to Monimia, and seeming to have his arm round her waist. Thrown totally off his guard by an appearance so sudden and so extraordinary, he cried, Pray, who is this gentleman?—Pray, what does this mean? Betty, who had been detained some paces behind, now approached; and Orlando,

recollecting himself, took no other notice of Monimia, who would, had she dared, have flown to him for protection; but slightly touching his hat, he advanced to Sir John, and said, I suppose, Sir, you have Mrs. Rayland's permission to shoot in these preserved grounds?

I always shoot, Sir, answered Sir John, haughtily, in all grounds that happen to suit me, whether they are preserved or no, and take no trouble to ask leave of any body.

Then, Sir, said Orlando with quickness, you must allow me to say that you do a very unhandsome thing.

And I, rejoined the other, say, whether you allow it or no, that you are a very impertinent fellow.

The blood rushed into the face of Orlando: and even the pale and terrified countenance of Monimia, who caught hold of Betty for support, did not deter him from resenting this insolence. Who are you, cried he, seizing Sir John by the collar, that thus dare to insult me?

And who are you, scoundrel, answered his antagonist, endeavouring to disengage himself, who dare to behave with such confounded impudence to a man of my consequence?

Curse on your consequence! exclaimed the enraged Orlando, throwing him violently from him: If you are a gentleman, which I doubt, give me an opportunity of telling you properly who I am.

If I am a gentleman? cried the other. Am I questioned by a park-keeper? or by some dirty valet?

Sir John, who was quite the modern man of fashion, did not much approve of the specimen Orlando had given him of athletic powers;—he liked him still less when he replied—My name is

Somerive—my usual residence at West Wolverton, or Rayland Hall. Now, Sir, as you speak neither to a park-keeper nor a valet, you must tell me from whom I have received this brutal insult.

My servant will tell you, replied he; and if you are likely to forget his information, you shall hear it properly from me to-morrow. In the mean time, my dear girl, added he, turning familiarly to Monimia, let us leave this fierce drawcansir to watch the old lady's pheasants; and as you seem much alarmed by his ridiculous fury, let me have the pleasure of seeing you safe home.

He would then have taken the arm of the trembling Monimia within his; but she shrunk from him, and would have passed on. He still insisted, however, on being permitted to attend her home; when Orlando, quite unable to command himself, sprung forward, and seizing the arm of Monimia, cried, This young lady, being under the protection of Mrs. Rayland, is under mine; and I insist on her not being troubled with your impertinent familiarity. Come, madam, if you will give me leave, I will conduct you to your aunt. He then, without waiting for any farther reply, walked hastily away; while Sir John, filled with rage and contempt, bade his servant follow him, and inform him that the person whom he had thus grossly affronted was Sir John Berkely Belgrave, baronet, of Belgrave Park in Suffolk, brother-in-law to the Earl of Glenlyon of Scotland, and member of parliament. Orlando heard this list of dignities with contemptuous coolness; and then, as he continued to walk on, bade the servant tell his master, Sir John Berkely Belgrave, of Belgrave Park in Suffolk, brother-in-law to the Earl of Glenlyon of Scotland, and member of parliament, that he expected to hear from him.

They were no sooner out of sight, than Orlando, addressing himself to Betty (for Monimia was quite unable to answer him), said: Where did you meet this man? and how came you to be with him?

Lord, said Betty, pertly, how could we help it? and pray where was the harm? For my part, I always speak to gentlefolks that speak to me; I've no notion of sitting mum chance, when gentlemen are so civil as to speak genteel to one. Here's a fuss, indeed, about nothing! And so you've gone and made a fine piece of work, and had a mind for to have fit that baron knight—I suppose there will be a pretty to do.

But where did you meet him? repeated Orlando impatiently.

Don't bite one's nose off, said Betty: Gemini! what a passion you put yourself into—Met him! —why we met him, and two more very obliging civil gentlemen as I ever wish to see; your brother was one of them, and what then? I'm sure it's wast ridiculous to quarrel and fall out about a few nasty pheasants with all the gentlefolks about. That's the reason that mistress never has nobody come to see her at the Hall; and one may as well live in a prison. I'm quite sick of it, for my share.

As nothing but mutterings were to be obtained from Betty, Orlando no longer questioned her; but as his first emotion of something like anger mingled with vexation towards Monimia had now subsided, he said to her, in a low and mournful voice, This is all very disagreeable: would to God you had never gone this unlucky walk.

Would to God I never had! for now I see nothing but misery will arise from it. But let us part here: (they were now in the park) it is quite enough for me to have gone through what has passed within this hour; there is no occasion to add to

my terror, by letting my aunt see us together. I thought I should suffer enough by being so late home; but, good God! what is *that* fear in comparison of what I suffer now about this quarrel?

The quarrel, as you call it, will be of no consequence, Monimia: I shall probably hear no more of it;—or, if I do, Mrs. Rayland will not be displeased at my having spoken to these men, who have so long impertinently trespassed on her manors.

But who, said Monimia, who shall ensure your safety, Orlando, if you *do* hear more of it?

I must take my chance about that. Do not, my Monimia, whispered he, make yourself uneasy about it: I shall see you at night; and now, perhaps, it will be better to part. He then said aloud, that Betty might hear, who was a few paces behind, Since you seem now to be delivered from the persecution of this impertinent stranger, I wish you a good morning. Orlando then walked another way, as if pursuing his diversion of shooting; and Betty joining Monimia, they proceeded together towards the house.

As they went, Betty, who was very much displeased with Orlando, because he seemed to have given all that attention to Monimia which she had herself a great inclination to monopolize, began again to exclaim against the folly of his having driven away and quarrelled with a baron knight, as she emphatically termed it. Why one would have thof, cried she, actually that the gentleman, who is in my mind a pretty gentleman, had done some great harm. If Mr. Orlando had been your sweetheart, miss, he couldn't have brustled up in a greater passion.

My sweetheart! said Monimia faintly; how can he be my sweetheart, when you know, Betty,

I have hardly exchanged ten words with him in my whole life?

Well, Miss, you nid not colour so about it—Lord, I suppose people have had sweethearts before now; and the better's their luck:—not that I say Mr. Orlando is yours, for I knows to the contrary.

I believe, said Monimia, making an effort to command herself, I believe, Betty, it will be as well, on many accounts, not to say any thing about all this at home. If this unlucky quarrel should go any farther, which I hope it will not, it will make my aunt very angry if she knows we were present at it; —and, upon the whole, I wish you would make a resolution not to speak of it.

Not I, answered Betty, I shan't speak of it, not I. I'm none of your blabs—and scorn to say any thing to make mischief; besides, we shall have anger enough for staying so much later than we were bid to stay. Yes; we shall have a fine rattle; and there stands Madam Lennard at the window, watching for us. They were now near the house, and poor Monimia, looking up, saw her aunt indeed watching their return. She trembled so much, that she could hardly find strength to get into the house, where as soon as Betty arrived she was hastening to the kitchen; but Monimia finding it impossible to meet, alone, the first rage of her aunt, entreated her to go up stairs.

Do not leave me, dear Betty, said the timid Monimia; I am in such terror already, that if my aunt is very violent against me, I really believe I shall die on the spot. You have more courage than I have—for Heaven's sake, do not leave me.

I don't know any good I can do, replied Betty; but, however, if I must go, I must. They then ascended the stairs together, and entered the room

where Mrs. Lennard waited for them in the disposition of an hungry tigress who has long been disappointed of her prey. She scolded with such vehemence for near half an hour, that she absolutely exhausted every form of invective and reproach which her very fertile genius, and the vocabulary of Billingsgate, could furnish her with; and then taking Monimia rudely by the arm, she led her to her turret, and locked her in, protesting that, so far from ever suffering her to go junketing out again to the village, she should not leave her room for a week. With this threat she left her weeping niece, and turned the key upon her: but Monimia, somewhat relieved by her departure, felt with secret delight that it was not in her power to confine her—and that at night she should see Orlando. Yet the danger he had run into recurred to her with redoubled force; and never did she pass such miserable hours as those that intervened between her aunt's fierce remonstrance, and that when she expected the signal from Orlando.

CHAPTER X.

The unfortunate rencontre which promised to produce so much uneasiness, was occasioned by the impatience of Orlando at Monimia's long absence. He had gone early in the morning to his father's, as he had the preceding evening proposed: and returning about ten o'clock, anxious to know if Monimia was come back from her walk, he inquired among the servants for Betty; and was told that she was not yet come home from the village, whither Mrs. Lennard had sent her early in the morning. What do you want with Betty, sir, said Pat-

tenson, who heard the inquiry. To make the fire up in my room, replied Orlando. Any other of the maids can do that as well, I suppose, answered the butler, sullenly; and then, from his manner, Orlando was first struck with the idea, that Pattenson, being an admirer of Betty, was apprehensive of his acquiring too much of her favour. This observation was a great relief to him, and dissipated the fears he had long entertained, that the old butler suspected his stolen interviews with Monimia.

Uneasy, however, at her staying so much later than the hour when he knew she was ordered to return, he could not forbear making a circuit round the wood-walks of the park, where he could not be observed, and passing towards the preserved pheasant-grounds, through which her path lay; where he had not waited long before the appearance of Monimia, attended by Sir John Belgrave, produced the alarming conversation which the last chapter related.

When Orlando parted from Monimia, and began coolly to consider what had happened, he felt no other uneasiness than that which arose from his apprehension that her name might be brought in question; for he was a stranger to all personal fear, and was totally indifferent to the resentment of Sir John Belgrave, which he thought it probable he might think it wise to lay aside; for he did not appear to be one of those who are eager to acquire fame by personal danger. However that might be, Orlando's principal concern was, how to appease the fears of Monimia; and as early as it was safe to go to the turret, he repaired thither; but this happened almost an hour later than usual. Pattenson had visitors, some tradesmen from a neighbouring town, to sup with him; and Orlando, who was upon the watch, had the mortification to hear them

singing in the butler's room at half after eleven, and to find it near one o'clock when they betook themselves to their horses, and departed. It was yet near half an hour longer before the lights about the house were extinguished, and all was quiet.

The night, dark and tempestuous, added to the gloomy appearance of all that surrounded Monimia; while her imagination, filled with images of horror, represented to her, that his delay was owing to the consequences of his morning's adventure; and these apprehensions, added to the fatigue and anxiety she had gone through during the day, almost overcame her, before the well-known, long-wished-for signal was heard.

At length Orlando had safely placed her by the fire, and began to speak as cheerfully as he could of what had passed; but he saw her pale, dejected, and ready to sink—her eyes swollen with weeping—and her whole frame languid, depressed by the uneasy circumstances of the day, and the uneasy suspense of the night. For the latter he easily accounted; and he endeavoured to dissipate her dread as to the consequences of the former. This fine gentleman, said he, who could persecute with his insulting attentions a young and defenceless woman, my Monimia, can never have much proper and steady courage; or, if he has, he will, if he has a shadow of understanding, be ashamed of exerting it in such a cause. Besides, after all the applications that have with great civility been made to Mr. Stockton, entreating him to forbear, either by himself, his friends, or servants, trespassing on those woods, where Mrs. Rayland is so fond of preserving the game, nothing can be more ungentleman-like than to persist in it: it looks like taking advantage of Mrs. Rayland's being without any man about her who has a right to enforce her

wishes, which, whether capricious and absurd or no, should surely be respected. I feel myself perfectly justified for having spoken as I did, and only regret that you were present. Relate to me, Monimia, what passed before I met you. Did not Betty say, that my brother was one of the people who were with this Sir John Belgrave?

Monimia then related all that had passed, as well as the alarm she had been in had allowed her to observe it; and in the behaviour of his brother, particularly in the speech he had made to Monimia as he passed her, Orlando found more cause of vexation than in any other circumstance of the morning. He foresaw that the beauty of Monimia, which had hitherto been quite unobserved, would now become the topic of common conversation; his father and his family would be alarmed, and his stay at the Hall imputed to motives very different from his love of solitude and study. Hitherto Monimia had seemed a beautiful and unique gem, of which none but himself had discovered the concealment, or knew the value. He had visited it with fonder idolatry, from alone possessing the knowledge where it was hid. But now half his happiness seemed to be destroyed, since his treasure was discovered, and particularly by his brother, who was so loose in his principles, and so unfeeling in his conduct. As these painful reflections passed through his mind, he sat a while silent and dejected, till, being awakened from his mournful reverie by a deep sigh from Monimia, he saw her face bathed in tears. Ah! Orlando, said she, in a tremulous voice, I see that you feel as I do. All our little happiness is destroyed; perhaps this is the last night we shall ever meet: something tells me, that the consequence of this luckless day will be our eternal separation. The sobs that swelled her bosom as

she said this impeded her utterance. Orlando, with more than usual tenderness, endeavoured to sooth and re-assure her—when suddenly, as he hung fondly over her, speaking to her in a low voice, she started, and said, in a whisper, Hush, hush—for Heaven's sake—I hear a noise in the chapel. Orlando listened a moment. No—it is only the wind, which is very high to-night. But listening again a moment, he thought, as she did, that it was something more; and before he had time to imagine what it might be, the old heavy lock of the study door, that opened from the passage to the chapel, was moved slowly; the door as slowly opened, and at it a human face just appeared. Starting up, Orlando, whose fears were ever alive for Monimia, blew out the single candle which stood at some distance from them; and then springing towards the door, he demanded fiercely who was there. Monimia, whose terror almost annihilated her faculties, would have thrown herself into his arms, and there have waited the discovery which appeared more dreadful than death: but he was instantly gone, and pursued through the chapel a man, whom however he could not overtake, and who seemed at the door to vanish—though the night was so dark, that it was impossible to distinguish any object whatever. Through the chapel he had heard the sound of feet; but when he got to the porch, and from thence listened for the same sound to direct his pursuit along the flag-stones, it was heard no more. All was profoundly silent, unless the stillness was interrupted by the howling of the wind round the old buildings.

Orlando, after a moment's pause, was disposed to fasten the chapel door before he returned; but he recollected that perhaps he might enclose an enemy within it, or impede the escape of his Monimia to her

turret. Uncertain therefore what to do, but too certain of the agonizing fears to which he had left her exposed, he hastily went back; and securing that door which led from the chapel to the passage as well as he could (for there was no key to it, and only a small rusty bar), and then fastening the door of the study, he approached, by the light of the wood-fire which was nearly extinguished, the fainting Monimia, who, unable to support herself, had sunk on the ground, and rested her head on the old tapestry chair on which she had been sitting.

Orlando found her cold, and almost insensible; and it was some moments before he could restore her to her speech. Terror had deprived her of the power of shedding tears; nor had she strength to sit up: but when he had placed her in her chair, he was compelled to support her, while he endeavoured to make light of a circumstance that overwhelmed him with alarm for her, and with vexation beyond what he had ever yet experienced.

They had both distinctly beheld the face, though neither had the least idea to whom it belonged. Orlando had as distinctly heard the foorsteps along the hollow ground of the chapel; it was not therefore one of those supernatural beings, to whose existence Monimia had been taught to give credit. Orlando would willingly have sheltered himself under such a prejudice, had it been possible; for all the ghosts in the Red Sea would have terrified him less than the discovery of Monimia by any of the family; yet, that such a discovery was made, he could not doubt; and the more he thought of even its immediate consequences, and the impossibility there might be to reconvey his lovely trembling charge to her own room, the greater his distraction became; while all he could make Mo-

nimia say, was, Dearest Orlando, let me stay and die here! A few hours longer of such extreme pain, as I at this moment suffer, will certainly kill me; and if I die in your presence, my death will be happier than my life *has* been, or than now it ever can be.

Orlando being thus under the necessity of conquering his own extreme disquiet, that he might appease hers, began to make various conjectures as to this man, tending to encourage the hope that it was some accidental intruder, and not one whose business was to discover her. But even if the villain came with that design, said he, I do not believe he could distinguish you, so instantly I blew out the candle: or if he saw a female figure, he could not know it to be you; it might as well be any other woman. These suppositions had little power to quiet the fears with which Monimia was tormented; but when Orlando seemed so deeply affected by her situation; when he declared to her that he was unequal to the sight of her terror; and that not even the discovery they dreaded could make him so wretched as seeing her in such a situation; she made an effort to recover herself, and at length succeeded so well as to regain the power of consulting with him, as to what was best to be done.

It was now early morning, but still very dark, with rain and wind. It was however time to consider of Monimia's return; for within two hours the servants would be up, and in even less time the labourers in the gardens would come to their work. It was at length agreed, that Orlando should go through the chapel first, and try if he could discover any traces of their alarming visitor; and if, after his reconnoitring, all appeared safe, that Monimia should return as usual to her apartment.

Orlando then, directing her to fasten herself the

study door within side, went through the chapel with a candle in his hand, which he shaded with his hat to prevent the light being seen from the windows. He looked carefully among the broken boards which had once formed two or three pews, and then went into the chancel, but saw nothing. He passed through the porch, leaving his candle behind the door on one of the benches, but nobody appeared: and by the very faint light of the first dawn, on a stormy October morning, which served only to make the darkness visible, he could just see round the whole chapel court, and was satisfied nobody was there. Thus convinced, he returned to Monimia; assured her that the wretch, whoever he was, was gone; and that there seemed to be no danger in her returning to her apartment. He endeavoured again to persuade her that her alarm, however just, would end without any of the consequences they dreaded; made her swallow a large glass of wine; and then taking one of her hands in his, he put his other arm round her waist; and with uncertain steps himself, while through fear *her* feet almost refused to move, they proceeded slowly and lightly through the chapel; neither of them spoke; Monimia hardly breathed; when arriving about the middle of it, they were struck motionless by a sudden and loud crash, which seemed to proceed from the chancel; and a deep hollow voice pronounced the words, Now—now.

There was a heavy stone font in the middle of the chapel, with a sort of bench under it. Orlando, unable at once to support and defend Monimia, placed her on this bench; and imploring her to take courage, he darted forward into the chancel, from whence he was sure the voice had issued, and cried aloud, Who is there? Speak this moment. Who are you?

The words re-echoed through the vaulted chancel, but no answer was returned: again, and in a yet louder voice, he repeated them, and again listened to hear if any reply was made. A slight and indistinct noise, like the shutting a distant door, and a low murmur which soon died away, left every thing in profound silence. He remained however yet an instant listening, while Monimia, resting against the stone a cheek almost as cold, was petrified with excess of fear; and in the dread pause between Orlando's question and his awaiting an answer, the old banners which hung over her head, waving and rustling with the current of air, seemed to repeat the whispers of some terrific and invisible being, foretelling woe and destruction; while the same wind by which these fragments were agitated hummed sullenly among the helmets and gauntlets, trophies of the prowess of former Sir Orlandos and Sir Hildebrands, which were suspended from the pillars of the chapel.

When Orlando returned to her, he found her more dead than alive. He soothed, he supported her, and earnestly besought her to exert herself against the fear that oppressed her.

What shall we do, Monimia? said he. For my own part, rather than see you suffer thus, I will take you in my hand, and declare at once to these people, whoever they are, that we cannot live apart. And should we, by such an avowal, forfeit the protection of our friends, what is there in that so very dreadful? I am young and strong, and well able to work in any way for a subsistence for us both. Tell me, Monimia, should you fear poverty, if we could but live together!

No, replied Monimia, acquiring courage from this excess of tenderness in her lover—no, Orlando, I should be too happy to be allowed to beg with you

round the world. What then have we to fear? whispered he. Come, let us go and face these people, if, as their expression Now seems to intimate, they are waiting for us without. In the chapel they are not, however the sound seemed to come from thence. I fear they way-lay us at the door. But if we are thus prepared against the worst that can befal us, why should we shrink now, only to be exposed a second time to alarms that seem to threaten your life, from your extreme timidity? Tell me, Monimia, have you courage to brave the discovery at once, which sooner or later must be made?

I *have* courage, answered she; let us go while I am able. She arose, but could hardly stand. Orlando however led her forward, listening still every step they took. They heard nothing either in the chapel or in the porch; and being now on the pavement without, they stopped and looked around them, expecting that the person or persons whose words had alarmed them would appear; but there was nobody to be seen, yet it was now light enough to discern every part of the court. This is wonderful, said Orlando; but since there seems to be nothing to prevent it, let me see you, my Monimia, safe to your room; and let me hope to have the comfort of knowing, that, after the fatigues and terrors of such a day and night, you obtain some repose. How can you know it, Orlando, answered she, since it will be madness, if we escape now, to think of venturing a meeting to-morrow night? I would not have you venture it; but, Monimia, I have thought of a way, by which I can hear from you and write to you in the course of the day, which, under our present circumstances, must be an infinite satisfaction. As I have at all hours access-to the turret, I can put a letter at your door behind

your bed; and there you can deposit an answer. To this expedient Monimia readily assented. Without any alarm they passed the rest of their short walk. Monimia promised to go immediately to bed, and to endeavour to compose herself; and Orlando, having seen her secured in her turret, returned to the chapel, determined to discover, if possible, what it was that had so cruelly alarmed them. Again he went over every part, but could discover nothing. He then determined to go round the house; and resolute not to spare any wretch who might be lurking about it with evil designs, he went into a large uninhabited parlour that opened into the study from the body of the house, where, over the chimney, several sorts of arms were disposed, which for many years had never been used. He took down an hanger, and a pair of horse pistols; both were somewhat injured by neglect, and of the latter he knew he could make no use till they had been cleaned; but drawing the hanger from its scabbard, he sallied forth in eager expectation of finding some means to discover, and at least to terrify from future intrusion, the man he had seen and heard; but after wandering round the house, through the gardens, and even over the adjoining offices, for above an hour, he saw nothing that could lead him to guess who it could be. The workmen and servants were all at their usual employments. He talked to some of them, but observed no consciousness of any thing extraordinary in any of them. He then returned, not less uneasy than before his search. Sometimes the idea of Sir John Belgrave presented itself; but that he should have ventured to visit the hall at such an hour, he soon rejected as an impossibility. Had Mrs. Rayland discovered his intelligence with Monimia, she would have signified her displeasure openly and at

once. At length he supposed it might be his brother. This, as Philip Somerive knew the house, appeared the least improbable of all his conjectures. But still it was hardly to be supposed that he would leave his jovial companions on such a night for the pleasure of persecuting him, when so many other means were now in his power, by which he might disturb the happiness of Orlando. Dissatisfied with every supposition, but becoming every instant more restless and anxious, he waited with impatience for the customary time of visiting Mrs. Rayland. It came, and she behaved to him just as usual. Some hours, therefore, were still passed in fruitless conjectures and tormenting suspense.

CHAPTER XI.

ORLANDO left Mrs. Rayland about twelve o'clock, convinced that, whatever discovery had been made, she was yet perfectly unacquainted with it. He thought it best to tell her as much of what had happened the preceding day, as he was sure she would not disapprove: he therefore mentioned to her, in the presence of Lennard, who seemed as ignorant of any misadventure as she was, that he had gone round the park with his gun, after his return from his father's in the morning, and, hearing several shot fired in the copses, he had followed the sound. I met, madam, said he, Mrs. Lennard's niece and your servant Betty, and almost at the same moment a gentleman shooting, and a servant following him with several pheasants. I thought it necessary to speak to him; and we had rather high words. I found he had two companions with him, whom I did not see: Stockton himself was one

of them (Orlando always carefully avoided naming his brother). The man to whom I spoke, was, I found from his servant, a baronet.

A baronet, child! said Mrs. Rayland; impossible! at least if he is, it must be one of the new-made baronets: these, as well as new-created lords, spring up like mushrooms, from nobody knows where every year. A man of family could not behave so. This person is some enriched tradesman, who has bought his title. Belgrave!—Belgrave!—I don't recollect the name. No, he cannot be a man of any family.

Orlando saw that Mrs. Rayland had not the least idea of the circumstances likely to follow his dialogue with Sir John Belgrave, and only dwelt upon the improbability that a man whose title was above two years old, could commit so great an indecorum as he had been guilty of. Unwilling, therefore, to awaken in her mind those apprehensions of future consequences, of which she seemed quite ignorant, he soon after turned the discourse: and, leaving her and Mrs. Lennard both in perfect good humour, he returned to his study, and sat down to give Monimia the satisfaction of knowing, that, to whomsoever the affright of the preceding evening was owing, Mrs. Rayland and her aunt had certainly no share in it, and as yet no suspicion of their intercourse.

He had been employed thus near half an hour, and had just finished his letter, when Betty bounced into his room.

There's one without vants to speak to you, cried she: pouting and sullenly she spoke; and then, shutting the door as hastily as she had opened it, was going; but Orlando following her, said, Betty! who is it? If the person has a letter for me, let it be sent in; if not, beg to know his name. (A

letter or message from Sir John Belgrave was what he expected.)

I shan't carry none of your messages indeed, replied the girl: but I suppose the person without is your father; I never see him but once or twice, but I'm pretty sure 'tis he.

Good God! exclaimed Orlando; and why, then, if you knew him, would you let my father wait without?

'Twas no business of mine, Mr. Orlando, to shew him in; and besides folks sometimes has *company* with them in their rooms, you know; and then an old father may be one too many, Mr. Orlando.

What do you mean by that? cried Orlando, eagerly.

Nay, never mind what I means—I knows what I knows; but I think you mid as well take care not to get other folks into bad bread, that are as innocent as the child unborn.

I insist upon your telling me, said Orlando, seizing her hand——I insist, nay I implore you, *dear* Betty, to tell me———

At this moment the old butler appeared at the door of the parlour in which they were standing; and seeing Orlando apparently interceding with Betty, he said roughly:

Instead of pulling the wenches about, and behaving in this rakish sort of way in *my* mistress's house, it would be more becoming of you to go speak to your father, who is waiting in the stable-yard.

You are impertinent, Mr. Pattenson! answered Orlando; and I beg you will understand that impertinence from any one I am not disposed to endure.

Orlando then went hastily out—Pattenson mut-

tering as he passed, I don't know how you'll help yourself.

In the stable-yard Orlando found Mr. Somerive. He had not dismounted, having made it a rule for many years never to enter Mrs. Rayland's house unless he was invited. Orlando saw by his countenance that he was under great concern; and respectfully approaching him, he said,

Dear sir, is all well at home? Is my mother returned? Is she well?

Your mother is not returned, Orlando, replied Mr. Somerive, in a grave and melancholy tone; but she is well, and all is well at home.

I hope then, Sir, that I owe this visit merely to your kindness. Will you get off your horse, and come in? I have a fire in the library—or shall I let Mrs. Rayland know you are here?

Neither the one nor the other, replied Mr. Somerive. But get your horse immediately and come with me; I have business with you.

I have only slippers on, Sir; will you walk in while I put on my boots?

You will not need them—I shall not detain you long. Your horse is already saddled by my desire —You have your hat, and therefore hasten to follow me.

Orlando would have given half a world to have had an opportunity of depositing his letter to Monimia, which he had put hastily into his pocket; but there was now no possibility of escaping to do it; and in the hope that his father would soon dismiss him, yet foreseeing that what he had to say was of a very painful nature, he mounted his horse, which one of the grooms brought out, and followed his father across the park. Mr. Somerive was silent till they had got at some distance from the house. Orlando rode by his side a foot-pace. He

observed that his father sighed deeply two or three times, and at length said: Orlando, I desire you will give me a faithful detail of all that passed yesterday.

The events of the night dwelt more upon his mind than those of the day; and believing therefore that his father alluded to them, he blushed deeply, and repeated, All that passed yesterday, Sir?

Yes, replied the father; you certainly don't mean to affect misunderstanding me. You have got into a quarrel with one of the guests of Mr. Stockton: I have heard of it from one quarter; let me now have your account of it.

That is very easily given, my dear Sir, answered Orlando, relieved by finding that the adventures of the night were not meant. I met a gentleman shooting in those woods, where you know it has been for years the particular whim of Mrs. Rayland, as it was, they tell me, of her father, to preserve the pheasents. You know that Mr. Stockton has often been entreated to forbear; and you will allow that it is unhandsome to persist in doing what is offensive to a defenceless woman; therefore, upon meeting this Sir John Something, with his servant carrying a net full of birds, I spoke to him on the impropriety of his shooting in those woods, and indeed almost within the park. He answered me very insolently, and I collared him; after which some rather high words passed between us. He sent his servant after me with his address; and I expected to have heard farther from him to-day.

And was that all, Orlando? said Mr. Somerive, looking steadily, and somewhat sternly in his face.

That was all that passed, Sir, replied Orlando, hesitating, and blushing again.

And was there no other person present when this

quarrel happened? Was there no other cause for your displeasure against this gentleman, than what arose from his having killed these birds? Orlando, I used in your infancy and early youth to have the firmest reliance on your veracity; shall I have the infinite mortification *now* to find myself mistaken?

No, Sir, answered Orlando, nor now, nor ever: I have no reason to be ashamed of saying the truth, when called upon—though I should——

Come, come, Orlando! cried his father; you would not tell it, if you could, without being guilty of the meanness of a direct falsehood, conceal it. There were two young women present; and you thought it necessary to resent the behaviour of this Sir John Belgrave to one of them.

Yes, I thought him very impertinent. The young woman was terrified, and I considered myself bound to protect her from him. I am sure, Sir, you would yourself have done the same thing.

Perhaps I might. You are acquainted then with this girl, for whom you exercised your chivalry?

Certainly, said Orlando, again blushing so much that his father could not but perceive it—certainly I am—am acquainted with her; that is—I know her to be sure, a little;—indeed, as I live so much under the same roof, it would be odd, and strange, if I did not.

Very odd and strange indeed, Orlando, replied Mr. Somerive drily—very odd and very strange;—especially as your brother tells me that the damsel is remarkably handsome.

Well, Sir, cried Orlando with quickness, admitting it to be so: does my brother think to do me an ill office with you, by telling you that I admire beauty; or that I defended a woman, for whom if she had been ugly, I should equally have interposed, from the impudent persecutions of a coxcomb?

I do not believe that your brother intended to do you an ill office. On the contrary, he came to me this morning, at an hour when a visit from him was very unexpected, to tell me that he was very uneasy at the resentment expressed by Sir John Belgrave; and to desire I would prevent this disagreeable affair from going farther, by prevailing on you to make some proper apology.

And if that was my brother's sole intention, I see no necessity for his having named the lady; there was otherwise ground enough for the quarrel, if a quarrel it can be called. However, I heartily forgive Philip; and am only sorry that he thinks he has cause to do me every disservice in his power.

Do you call his anxiety for your safety a disservice? he hopes to prevent any risk of it, by telling me what has happened, and procuring, before it is too late, an apology.

Orlando checked his tears: And does my father really think, said he, that I *ought* to make an apology?

If the affair passed as Philip represented it to me, I think you ought; for you seem by that account to have been the aggressor.

No, Sir, cried Orlando: in every thing else your commands should be my law; but here I hope you will not lay them upon me, because I feel that, for the first time in my life, I must disobey them.

And your mother, said Mr. Somerive, your mother, on her return, is to hear that you are engaged in a duel; that you have either killed a man, who is a stranger to you, for the sake of a few paltry pheasants, or have yourself fallen? Oh rash and headstrong boy!—if you did not feel deeper resentment than what a trespass on Mrs. Rayland's grounds occasioned, you would not thus have engaged in a dispute so alarming. I greatly fear your attachment to that girl.

Orlando, without denying or assenting to the truth of this accusation, related distinctly the very words that had passed.—You see, Sir, continued he, that it was about no girl the quarrel began; for upon my soul! these were the very words.

I think still, said his father, that it is a very foolish affair; and, should Sir John Belgrave insist upon it, you ought to make an excuse.

Never, said Orlando; and do not, dear Sir, do not, I conjure you, lay me under the cruel necessity of disobeying you. You cannot, with all the spirit you possess yourself, desire me to act like a coward; you must despise me if I did: and even my dear, my tender mother would blush for her son, if she thought him afraid of any man when he is conscious of a good cause.

What is to be done, then? cried Somerive in great perplexity. You will certainly receive a challenge, Orlando.

And then I must certainly accept it. But indeed, dear Sir, you are needlessly distressed: if this warlike Sir John must vindicate his injured honour by firing a brace of pistols at me, I have as good a chance as he has; and at all events if I fall, you will be delivered from the anxiety of providing for me, and I shall die lamented, which is better than to live disgraced. But after all (seeing his father's distress increase,) I am much mistaken if this most magnanimous baronet had not rather let it alone— A few hours will determine it; and before my mother's return, whom I should be very sorry to terrify, it will be over one way or other.

You will not then, Orlando, settle it by an apology?

Never indeed, my dear Sir.

Nor give me your word that there is no attach-

ment between you and this girl, this niece of Lennard's?

Why, my dear father, replied Orlando gaily, if I am to be shot by Sir John Belgrave, my attachments are of little consequence; it will therefore be time enough to talk of that when I find myself alive after our meeting.

Young man, said Somerive, with more sternness than he almost ever shewed towards Orlando before, you were once accustomed to obey implicitly all my commands.—At hardly twenty, it is rather early to throw off all parental authority. But I see that the expectations you have formed of possessing the Rayland estate, have made you fancy yourself independent.

Pardon me, dear Sir! if I say you greatly mistake me. If I were to-morrow to find myself, by Mrs. Rayland's will, the owner of this property, which is of all things the most unlikely, I should not be at all more independent than I am now; for, while my father lived, I should be conscious that he alone had a right to the Rayland estate; nor should I then consider myself otherwise than as a dependent on his bounty.

There is no contending with you, Orlando, said Mr. Somerive, bursting into tears; I cannot bear this!—You must do, my son, as your own sense and spirit dictate; and I must leave the event to Heaven, to whose protection I commit you!—Yet remember your mother, Orlando: remember your sisters, whose protector you will, I trust, live to be; and do not, more rashly than these unlucky circumstances require, risk a life so precious to us all.

Orlando threw himself off his horse, and, seizing his father's hand, bathed it with his tears. Neither of them spoke for some moments. At length Orlando, recovering himself, said: My father! I

would die rather than offend you—If I could, or if I can without cowardice and meanness evade a meeting which may give you pain, I will. In the meantime let us say nothing about this squabble to alarm my mother, if she returns, as you say you expect she will, to-morrow. If any thing happens worth your knowing, you shall instantly hear of it: and in the mean time let me entreat you not to make yourself uneasy; for I am well convinced all will end without any of those distressing events which your imagination has painted.

Mr. Somerive shook his head and sighed. As he found nothing could be done with Orlando, he had determined to try to put a stop to the further progress of the affair, by his own interposition with Sir John Belgrave; and therefore, bidding Orlando tenderly adieu, he told him to go back to the Hall, while he himself went to his own house to consider how he might best ward off the impending evil from a son whom he every day found more cause to love and admire. He saw too evidently that Orlando had an affection for Mrs. Lennard's niece; for which, though it might be productive of the loss of Mrs. Rayland's favour, he knew not how to blame him. But these discoveries added new bitterness to the reflections he often made on the situation of Orlando; with which, notwithstanding the flattering prospect held out by Mrs. Rayland's late behaviour to him, his father could not be satisfied while it remained in such uncertainty. The anxiety however that he felt for the immediate circumstances, suspended his solicitude for those which were to come. A few hours might perhaps terminate that life, about the future disposition of which he was so continually meditating.

Orlando, deeply concerned at the distress of his father, and too much confirmed in his opinion of his

brother's treachery and malice, returned to the Hall filled with disquiet. He had now much to add to his letter to Monimia, for he resolved to keep nothing a secret from her; and he went impatiently into his own room to finish his letter, when, upon the table, he found the following billet:

SIR,

As I find, on inquiry, you are by birth a gentleman, you cannot believe I can pass over the very extraordinary language and conduct you chose to make use of yesterday. Yet, in consideration of your youth, and of your relationship to Mr. Somerive, the friend of *my* friend Stockton, I shall not otherwise notice it than by desiring you will write such an apology as it becomes you to make, and me to receive. I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Carloraine Castle, Oct.18, 1776. J. B. BELGRAVE.

To this letter, which Orlando was told was delivered a few moments before by a servant who waited, he, without hesitation, returned the following answer:

SIR,

Not conscious of any impropriety in my conduct, I shall assuredly make no apology for it; and I beg that neither your indulgence to my youth, or my relationship to Mr. Philip Somerive, may prevent your naming any other satisfaction which your honour may require, and which I am immediately ready to give.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Rayland Hall, Oct. 18, 1776. ORLANDO SOMERIVE.

Having dispatched this billet, he continued very coolly to conclude his letter to Monimia; and this

last circumstance was the only one he concealed from her. Having done it, he went to the turret, and softly mounted the staircase, flattering himself that, if he heard no noise, and could be quite secure that no person was with her, he might venture to see Monimia for a few moments. He listened impatiently; but to his infinite mortification, heard Betty talking with more than her usual volubility; and as his name was repeated, he could not help attending to her harangue.

Oh! to be sure, said she, in answer to something Monimia had said; to be sure, I warrant Orlando is a saint and an angel in your eyes—but I know something.

Tell me, Betty, said Monimia tremulously, tell me what you know.

Why I know—that though he looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, cheese won't choke him. I can tell you what, Miss, he's slyer than his brother, but not a bit gooder—What's more, he lets women into his room at night.

Women! cried Monimia, what women? How should he do that? and who should they be?

That's more than I can tell; but some hussy or other he does let in, I tell you, for I know they as have seen her. There's Pattenson has been as mad as fury with me, saying as how it was me; and all I can say won't persuade him to the contrary.—Egollys! if it had been me, I should not have gone to have denied it, in spite of Pattenson; but he's as mad as a dog, and won't hear nothing I can say, but swears he'll tell my lady—though I can bring Jenny to prove that, at that very time as he says I was sitting along with 'Squire Orlando in his own study, I was fast asleep up stairs—And so if Pattenson does make a noise about it, Jenny offers to take her bible oath before the Justice.

I think, said Monimia, acquiring a little courage from the hope she now entertained that she had not been distinguished, I think it is much better to say nothing about it.

So I tells him, answered Betty; but he is so crazy angered with me that he won't hear nothing I can say—and there to be sure I own I *should* like to know who this puss is.

Why, replied Monimia, what can it signify, Betty, to you?

It signifies to every body, I think, Miss, especially to us poor servants, who may lose our characters. You see that I'm blamed about it already, and Pattenson is always a telling me that Mr. Orlando has a liking for me, and that I keeps him company.—Not I I'm sure!—but it is very hard to be brought into such a quandary as this, when one's quite as 'twere as innocent as can be. I'd give my ears to see this slut.

Why, who did ever see her? inquired Monimia.

Oh! that's neither here nor there—she was seen, and that's enough.

I think it's impertinent in any body to pry into Mr. Orlando's room, and I dare say it is all a mistake——

Please the Lord, I'll find out the mistake, said Betty, and, I warrant know who this dear friend of Orlando's is before I'm two days older—and I know somebody else that won't be sorry to know.

Who is that?

Why his brother—a dear sweet man—He came up to our house last night, Miss, after 'twas dark, on purpose to speak to me. I won't tell you half he said; but he's a noble generous gentleman, and has a more genteeler taste too than Orlando; and for my share, I think he's as handsome.

Monimia now seemed to let the discourse drop, and to be considering what she ought to do. Orlando waited yet a little, in hopes that Betty would go, and that he might have an opportunity of seeing Monimia: but immediately the dinner bell rang; and as he now generally dined with Mrs. Rayland, he was afraid of being inquired for, and retired silently to his room, somewhat easier, from the strong reason he now had to believe, that, whoever it was whose curiosity brought them the preceding evening to his door, they were actuated by no suspicion in regard to Monimia, and that they had not even distinguished her countenance and figure; and he meditated how to prevent any suspicion concerning her—content to be accused himself of any other folly or error, if Monimia could but escape.

CHAPTER XII.

It was probable that Sir John Belgrave's messenger would immediately return, fixing the time and place where he would meet Orlando, who debated with himself whether he should send the billet he had received, and that he expected, to his father. He had not yet determined how he ought to act, and was traversing the flag stones which went around the house considering of it, when his father's servant appeared, and delivered to him the following letter:

MY DEAR ORLANDO,

I have just seen Sir John Belgrave at Mr. Stockton's, who, on my account, as this affair really gives me great pain, is willing to drop any farther resentment, if you will only say to me, that you

are sorry for your rashness. I entreat you to gratify me in this—I will not say I command you, because I hope that I need not; but this unlucky business *must* be settled before the return of your mother, from whom I have to-day heard that she will be at home to-morrow with Isabella, since she cannot determine to leave her in London.—I have also a letter from my old friend General Tracy, of whom you recollect hearing me speak as one of my early friends. He is much acquainted with your uncle Woodford, and has been very obliging in promoting his interest among his connections, which are with people of the first rank —Having met your mother and sisters at Mr. Woodford's, he has renewed that friendship which time and distance, and our different modes of life, have for some years interrupted; and as he is fond of field sports, and your mother has said how happy I shall be to see him, he intends coming hither to-morrow for ten days or a fortnight, and brings your mother and Isabella down in his post-chaise. This intelligence has put Selina, who is now my housekeeper, into some little hurry, as you know we are little used to company; and it prevents my coming to you myself, as I should otherwise have done.—But I repeat, Orlando, that this uneasiness must be removed from my mind. Write to me therefore such a letter as I may shew to this Sir John Belgrave, and let us hear no more of it. I beg that you will inform Mrs. Rayland that I expect company, and that you will obtain her leave to be here to-morrow to receive them. Robert waits for your answer, which I am persuaded will be satisfactory to

Your affectionate father,

P. SOMERIVE.

To this letter, which was extremely distressing to Orlando, since it imposed upon him what he had he thought with propriety refused, he knew not what to answer. To suffer his father to say to Sir John Belgrave that he was sorry for what had passed, seemed to him even more humiliating than to say it himself——he could not bear to owe his safety to his father's fears; yet it gave him infinite pain to disobey him, and was the first time in his life that he had been tempted to act for himself, in opposition to his father; and the apprehensions of what his mother would feel were still more distressing to him; yet his high spirit could not stoop to apologize for what he knew was not wrong, nor to say he was concerned for having acted as he should certainly act again were the same occasion to arise. After much and uneasy deliberation, he at length dispatched to his father the following lines:

MY DEAR SIR,

Again I must entreat your pardon for the disobedience I am compelled to be guilty of. Indeed it is impossible for me, highly as I honour your commands, and greatly as I feel the value of your tenderness, quite impossible for me to make any apology to Sir John Belgrave: for, were I to say that I am sorry for what had passed, I should say what is false, which surely my father will never insist upon. It would grieve my very soul to alarm my mother; but surely there is no necessity for her knowing any thing of this silly business. As you expect General Tracy to-morrow, of whose military character I have often heard you speak with applause, I entreat that you will rather entrust him with the affair, and ask him whether I ought, all circumstances fairly related, to make the submission required of

me; and as I am sure I may leave it to him to decide for me, I promise that I will abide by his determination, and will not till then meet Sir John Belgrave if he should in the mean time send me an appointment, though even this delay is, I own, incompatible with my ideas of that spirit which, in a proper cause, should be exerted by a son of yours. Let this promise, however, of a reference to General Tracy make you easy at present, my dear and honoured Sir! and be assured in every other instance of the obedience, and in every instance of the affection of your

Rayland Hall, Oct. 20, 1776. ORLANDO.

Having dispatched this letter, Orlando dismissed the affair of Sir John Belgrave from his mind for the present, and gave all his thoughts to Monimia. The circumstance of the man's appearing at his door, though much less alarming than it seemed at first, was yet such as threatened to put an end to all those delicious conversations which had so long been the charm of his existence. Not to have an opportunity of seeing Monimia, was death to him; yet to see her, were she exposed to such terrors as she had undergone at their last interview, was impossible. In order to turn all suspicion from her, he would very willingly have been suspected of a *penchant* for Betty, and have encouraged her flippant forwardness; but that, as it awakened the envy and jealousy of Pattenson, was likely to put him upon the watch, and to bring on the very evil he dreaded. During the day, indeed, he had now frequent opportunities of seeing Monimia, who was now, unless under her aunt's displeasure, less rigorously confined than formerly; but those interviews were never but in the presence of a third person; and after what his father had said, and what had happened

on the alarming evening, he was compelled to be more than ever cautious. Tormented by uncertainty, and perplexed by apprehensions, he passed a wretched afternoon; impatiently waiting till he could ascend the turret, and at least, if he could not see Monimia, obtain a letter from her. The hour at length came when he believed every one in the house was occupied with their own affairs; and having excused himself from drinking tea with Mrs. Rayland, under the pretence of being busied in writing for his father, he stole softly to the room under that of Monimia, and from thence up the stairs.

He listened, fearful of again hearing the indefatigable clack of Betty; but every thing was profoundly silent. The letter, which he had deposited there, was gone; but there was no answer. He feared Monimia was ill—the terror, the fatigue of the preceding night, had been too much for her. It was dreadful to be within two or three paces of her, and yet not dare to inquire.

Still listening some time in breathless anxiety, he at length determined to tap gently at the door; for he was pretty well convinced she was alone. Monimia, who was really ill, had lain down; but, starting at the well known signal, she approached close to the door, and said, Orlando!—Gracious Heaven! are you there?

Yes, yes! replied he; is it impossible you can admit me for a moment? I am miserable, and shall hardly keep my senses if I cannot see you.

Monimia, without replying, moved her bed and admitted him. It was already dark, but she had a candle on her table, and Orlando was shocked to see how ill she looked. He spoke of it tenderly to her: she assured him it was only owing to her having been so much fatigued and frightened, and that

a night's rest, if she could obtain it, would entirely restore her. But you must not stay, Orlando! said she—indeed you must not!

Why? answered he—Is not your door fastened? Who is likely to interrupt us?

My aunt or Betty, replied she; for though my aunt is at her tea, there is no being secure of her. I have said I am ill, in which it can hardly be said I am guilty of a falsehood; and as I am under her displeasure on account of my unluckily staying beyond her orders, yet she may perhaps be seized with some whim; and even the voice of Betty would terrify me to death.

Orlando, promising to go, yet finding it impossible to tear himself from her, began to speak of what he had heard from Betty in the morning, while he waited at the door of Monimia's room after depositing his letter. You see, my angel, said he, you see you are not suspected; and that the impertinent brute, whoever it was that dared intrude upon us, did not distinguish you. Make yourself easy, therefore, I conjure you, and let us think no more of this alarm, for which, though I cannot yet discover how, I am sure I shall in a few days be able to account.

But I shall never again have courage to venture to your room, Orlando.

You will, replied he, surely, when I am able to convince you that such an interruption will happen no more, and till then I do not wish you to venture.

Hush, dearest Orlando! whispered Monimia; speak very low! I heard the door at the end of the passage open.

They both listened; and instantly Betty, by attempting to open the door, convinced them their fears were not groundless.

Lud, Miss, cried she, pushing against the door,

what have you locked yourself in for? Open the door—I want to speak to you.

Don't speak! whispered Orlando: let me out as softly as you can, and then tell her you were sleeping.

She has the ears of a mole, said Monimia, and I shall be undone.

Quickly and softly, however, as her trembling hands would let her, she assisted in Orlando's evasion—Betty still thumping at the door—I must come in, Miss, this minute.

I am laid down for my headach, replied Monimia as soon as Orlando was gone: It is strange that I can never have any repose! I was just asleep, Betty, and should be very glad not to be disturbed. Glad or not glad, replied the other, I must come in. 'Tis an odd thing, I think, for people to push their chairs and tables about in their sleep! If you can do that, I suppose you can open the door?

Monimia now opened the door, and tremulously asked Betty, who flounced into the room, what was the matter?

Matter! said she—why there's a fine to do below—There's your favourite young 'Squire; he, as never does no wrong, has got into a fine scrape—just as I thought!

Good God! replied she, in a voice hardly articulate, tell me what you mean.

Why this great gentleman, as he affronted so, has determined to kill him out-right—He have been writing to him about it this morning; and Orlando, he is so stomachful, he won't ask the gentleman's pardon, and so now they be to fight.

And how, said Monimia, speaking with difficulty—how did you hear all this?

Why, from Sir John's own man, a smart servant as ever I see, who is just come with a letter to

fix the time and place where they be to meet; and he have been telling us how it is to be: and so my mistress she have heard of it, and there'll be fine to do I can tell you. They have been going for to find young 'Squire Orlando, but he is out somewhere or another. Mistress is in a fine quandary, but she says how Orlando was quite in the right.

Betty having thus unburthened herself of news which she was so anxious to tell, returned to see a little more of the smart servant, but not till Orlando, who had heard enough at the beginning of her conversation, had flown down to receive a letter which he had long expected, and now prepared to answer; though he was convinced that, by the bustle Sir John Belgrave chose to make, there was very little probability that he desired to be very much in earnest. The anxious night that this would occasion to his Monimia was his chief concern. He determined to attempt seeing her again, in hopes to alleviate her uneasiness; but he was first compelled to attend to Mrs. Rayland, who sent for him, and to whom he now related what had passed before, and read the letter which he had just received from Sir John Belgrave, which ran thus:

SIR,

In consideration of your respectable father, I did hope you might have spared me the disagreeable task of chastising your improper behaviour. I shall be, on Thursday at twelve o'clock, in the Meadow adjoining to West Wolverton, with a brace of pistols, of which you shall take your choice.

I am, Sir,

your humble servant,

Carloraine Castle, JOHN BERKELEY BELGRAVE.
Oct. 20th, 1776.

To this billet Orlando answered thus—

SIR,

I will assuredly attend you at the time and place appointed; and have only to regret, that the persons to whom this affair has most unnecessarily been communicated, have so long an interval of uneasiness thus imposed upon them. I am, Sir,

your humble servant,

Rayland Hall, ORLANDO SOMERIVE.
Oct. 20th, 1776.

Mrs. Rayland, who entered into this business with an earnestness of which she seemed on most occasions incapable, approved of his letter, and admired the spirit he exerted in a cause which she considered as her own. Her fears for his safety seemed to be absorbed in the pleasure she felt in having found a champion who was so ready to take up her quarrel against those whose inroads had long disturbed her, and whom she hoped to mortify and humble.

Orlando, therefore, never was so high in her favour; but his own heart was torn with anguish, in reflecting on the situation of Monimia. As soon as the house was quiet he returned to the turret, made desperate by reflecting on her distress, and thinking it better to hazard a discovery than to leave her a whole night in solicitude so alarming.

Monimia, who little expected his return, admitted him as soon as she heard his signal. He found her in that state of mind which allows not the sufferer to shed tears; pale, and almost petrified, she sat on the side of her bed, with clasped hands and fixed eyes, while he related to her the whole of a transaction which he wished he could have concealed from her till the event could be known. But it was long before he could persuade her that

the danger was infinitely less than it appeared. It was evident that Sir John Belgrave, by postponing to Thursday what he might as well have settled on Wednesday, had no objection to the interference of the family he had taken care to alarm; and father wished to have the honour of appearing a man of nice honour and dauntless courage at little expence, than to run the hazard of maintaining that character by needless rashness. When Orlando therefore had represented his conduct in the ridiculous light it deserved, and shewn her how probable it was that his father and General Tracy would contrive to prevent a meeting, the fears of Monimia were in some degree subdued; and at day break Orlando left her, having insisted on her promising to endeavour to sleep, and to make herself as easy as under such circumstances was possible.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the following morning Orlando received an early summons from his father, requesting him to be at home by two o'clock, when his mother, his sister, and General Tracy were expected; for, as the General travelled with his own four horses, which were very fine ones, and of which he was particularly fond, the ladies had agreed to remain one night on the road, and reach home early the second day; though the journey was otherwise easily performed in one, West Wolverton being only about sixty-five miles from London.

Orlando having informed Mrs. Rayland of the reason of his absence; having seen Monimia for a moment, again whispered to her to be less apprehensive for his safety, and promising to see her at

night, he proceeded to obey his father. On his arrival, he found him walking with the General on the grass plot before the door; and springing from his horse, paid his duty to him, was introduced in form to the General, and then eagerly asked for his mother and his sister.

They were within; and Orlando, flying to them, was surprised by his mother's throwing her arms around him, and falling into an agony of tears, in which his three sisters, who stood around her, accompanied her. He entreated an explanation; and learned from Isabella, who alone was able to speak, that the servants had been telling them, instantly on their arrival at home, that he was about to fight a duel, in which it was the opinion of the informers that he must certainly be killed.

Orlando, execrating the folly of the servants, or rather the paltry conduct of Sir John Belgrave, who had apparently made all this bustle on purpose, endeavoured to re-assure and console his mother; but her alarm for his safety was too great to allow her to listen patiently to any thing he could say, since the fact of his having received and accepted a challenge from Sir John Belgrave he did not attempt to deny. The anxious mother, now that she saw him before her, thought only of preventing the meeting which might deprive her of that comfort for ever. She seemed afraid of his stirring from her sight, as if Sir John Belgrave had lurked in every corner of the house; and desired he would remain with her in her own room, while she sent Isabella to entreat that Mr. Somerive would come to her.

When he saw her, her tears and agitation sufficiently explained to him, that those whom he had expressly ordered to be silent had found it impossible to obey him. To Selina and Emma, the two youngest girls, who had remained at home, it had

been known almost as soon as to himself, but he had enjoined them to conceal it from their mother; and knew that, whatever it cost them to be silent on such a subject, neither of them would disobey him. It was, however, too late, or at least useless, to declaim against the folly of those who *had;* and he found sufficient employment in appeasing the distress of his wife and daughters, while he sent Orlando to entertain the General.

General Tracy was the second brother of a noble family; and, having entered very young into the army, had passed through the inferior ranks with that rapidity which interest always secures. At five-and-thirty he had a regiment; and as some of the fortunes of uncles and aunts had centred in him, he was now, at near sixty, a man of very large fortune, and seemed to want nothing to complete his happiness, but the power of persuading others, as he had almost persuaded himself, that he was but five-and-thirty still.

To effect this, and maintain that favour which he had always been in among the ladies, was the great object of his life. His person had been celebrated for beauty; and he desired to preserve a pre-eminence, which was in his opinion superior to any fame he could derive from his bravery in the field, or his ability in the senate, where he had long been a member, certainly voting with the minister of the day. He had a place about the court, at which he was a constant attendant, and where the softness and elegance of his manners, the pliability of his political attachments, and his very considerable interest and property, rendered him a great favourite.—All the time he could spare from his duty there, he seemed to devote to the service of those fashionable women who give the ton, and whose favour he disputed with the rising heroes of

the fashionable world. But he felt in reality only disgust and satiety in their company; and had no taste but for youth and beauty, of which he was continually in search—and with his fortune his search could not be unsuccessful. He had no scruples to deter him from decoying any young woman whom he liked, that chance might throw into his power; but he usually avoided with care any scheme which was likely to be interrupted by the unpleasant remonstrances of a father or a brother, and generally pursued only the indigent and the defenceless.

As he purchased his wine of Mr. Woodford, he had occasionally been at his house. His daughters were rather handsome, and very lively girls; and though they did not come exactly under the description of those whose preference the General could without much trouble secure, he found himself pleased with their company, because they were greatly flattered by the admiration of such a fashionable man, and never so happy as when the General sent his superb coach for them, and gallanted them to some public place, or drove them in his phæton through Hyde Park to Kensington Gardens. Their father, who thought more of the good customer which the General was himself, and the great families he had recommended him to, than of any necessity for reserve in his daughters, encouraged this acquaintance (which their mother was as well pleased with as the young women) till the neighbourhood talked loudly of their indiscretion and till the youngest Miss Woodford, who was his peculiar favourite, was declared by many ladies to have considerably injured her reputation. This she herself considered only as a testimony of their envy, and her own superior attractions; and the more she heard of their malignant remarks, the

more eagerly she endeavoured to shew her contempt of their opinion, and her power over the General, who, on the return of the family to town after their visit to West Wolverton, was more than usual at the house. But thither he was no longer attracted by the charms of Miss Eliza Woodford. The moment he beheld Isabella Somerive, he had no eyes for any other person; and though he soon learned that she was in a situation of life which placed her above those temptations which he generally found infallible, and had a father and two brothers to protect her, the impression she had made was such that he could not determine to lose sight of her; and as the discovery of the preference he gave her had made both her cousins very little desirous of her company in London during the winter, where she seemed too likely to rob them of all their conquests, he found she was to return home with her mother—and thither he resolved to follow her.

An opportunity of introducing himself into the family of Somerive was easily obtained, when he recollected that, in the preceding war, Somerive, in whose own county there was at that time no militia, had, being then an active man, procured a commission in that of a neighbouring county, and served in a camp then formed for the defence of the coast, where he himself was a captain. They had at that time been frequently together, and afterwards kept up some degree of intimacy, till Somerive's marriage fixing him wholly in retirement, the gay and fashionable soldier thought of him no more.

The General, however, no sooner knew who the visitors at Woodford's were, than he most assiduously and successfully paid his court to Mrs. Somerive; talked to her continually of her husband, whose merits he affected to remember with infinite

regard, and for whose interest he appeared to feel the warmest concern. It was a theme of which Mrs. Somerive, who adored her husband, was never weary; and while General Tracy so pathetically lamented the interruption of their friendship, nothing was more natural than her entreaties to him that he would renew it.

That was the point he had laboured to gain, and he accepted the invitation she gave him, adding the opportunity of the shooting season to his other inducements, the better to colour so unexpected a visit. He had found it convenient to pretend a great passion for field sports—partly because it was fashionable, and partly because it shewed that his powers of enduring fatigue were equal to the youthful appearance he assumed; and to support this, he now and then went through, what was to him most miserable drudgery, that of a day's hunting or shooting; but he more usually contrived, when he was at the houses of his friends for these purposes, to sprain his ancle in the first excursion he made, or to hurt himself by the recoil of his gun; and by such methods he generally managed to be left without suspicion at home with the ladies; with whom he was so universal a favourite, and to whom he had so many ways of recommending himself, by deciding on their dress, reading to them books of entertainment, and relating anecdotes collected in the higher circles where he moved in the winter, that he found no loss of attention from the progress of years—a progress indeed which he took the utmost pains to conceal. His clothes, which were always made by the most eminent taylor, were cut with as much care as those of the most celebrated beauty on her first appearance at court; and he had several contrivances, of his own invention, to make them fit with advantage to his person. His hands were

more delicate than those of any lady; and though he could not so totally baffle the inexorable hands of time as to escape a few wrinkles, he still maintained a considerable share of the bloom of youth, not without suspicion of Olympian dew, cold cream, and Spanish wool. Certain it is that he was very long at his toilet every day, to which no person, not even his valet-de-chambre, was admitted. With all this he was a man of the most undoubted bravery; and had not only served in Germany with great credit, but had been engaged in several affairs of honour, in which he had always acquitted himself with courage and propriety. Such was the man who was now, from no very honourable motives, become an inmate in the house of Mr. Somerive.

When Mr. Somerive had appeased the distress into which his wife was thrown by the intelligence she had so abruptly received about Orlando, and had prevailed upon her to compose herself and appear at dinner, he returned back to his friend, whom he found in conversation with Orlando; and he determined that he would, over their wine, relate to him what had passed between Sir John Belgrave and his son (who had put Sir John's last letter into his hands), and take the General's opinion as to what was fit to be done.

Dinner was announced, and the ladies of the family appeared;—the mother, with swollen eyes, which she could not a moment keep from Orlando; and the daughters appearing to sympathize with her, particularly Selina, who was fondly attached to Orlando, and who, from the terror in which she saw her mother, having caught redoubled apprehension, could hardly command her tears; and though the General failed not to compliment her on her beauty, which even exceeded that of her sister, and to speak in the warmest terms to Mr. and Mrs.

Somerive of their lovely family, Selina heeded him not. He observed that Isabella was less insensible of his studied eulogiums, and from thence drew a favourable omen. Emma, the youngest of the girls, was only between twelve and thirteen.

As soon as the table-cloth was removed, Mrs. Somerive, under pretence of being a good deal fatigued with her journey, and somewhat indisposed, withdrew with her daughters: Mr. Somerive soon after gave Orlando a hint to go also; and then he opened to General Tracy the affair which lay so heavy on his heart, and entreated his advice how to act.

I am glad, answered the General, to learn the cause of Mrs. Somerive's concern, which was so evident at dinner, as well as that of her amiable daughters, that I was afraid some very disagreeable incident had happened in the family.

And is not, said Mr. Somerive, what I have related disagreeable enough?

No, upon my honour! I see nothing in it but what is rather a matter of exultation. Your son is one of the finest and most spirited young men I ever saw. If he was a son of my own, I should rejoice that he had acted so properly, and be very proud of him.

But you would not risk his life, surely? said Mr. Somerive.

Why, as to that, replied the General, in these cases there is some little risk, to be sure: but I should never check a lad of spirit. I know Belgrave, added he, smiling.

And what is his reputation for courage? enquired Mr. Somerive.

Oh! he is quite the fine man of the day, answered the General, carelessly.—He will fight, if

he must—but I believe is quite as willing to let it alone.

It will break my wife's heart, said Mr. Somerive dejectedly, and amazed at the different light in which two people, from their different modes of life, consider the same object; it will certainly break my wife's heart, if any evil befalls Orlando.

General Tracy now saw that an opportunity offered by which he might confer an obligation on the family, which must secure their endless gratitude, and he resolved to embrace it.

If it makes you all so uneasy, replied he, after a moment's pause, and especially if her fears make Mrs. Somerive so very wretched, suppose we try what can be done to put an end to the affair without a meeting. I dare say Belgrave will easily be induced, on the slightest apology, to drop the affair entirely.

But even the slightest apology Orlando will not be persuaded to make, said Mr. Somerive.

He is right, answered the General; and I honour him for his resolution. It is a thousand pities, continued he, again pausing, that such a gloriously spirited young fellow should waste his life in seclusion, waiting on the caprices of an old woman—— What do you intend to do with him?

That, said Somerive, is what I have long been in doubt about. I had thoughts once of putting him into trade; but to that project Mrs. Rayland's objections, and Orlando's little inclination to follow it, put an end.

I am glad they did; for it would have been a sad sacrifice, I think, to have set so fine a young man down to a compting-house desk for the rest of his life.

And at other times, re-assumed Mr. Somerive, I have thought of the church. Mrs. Rayland has

very considerable patronage; but though I have hinted very frequently to her my wishes on this subject, she never would understand me, to give me any assurance that she would secure him a living; or made any offer of assistance to support him at the university, which she knows that it is quite impossible for me, circumstanced as I am at present, to do.

She was in the right of it, cried the General. The old lady has more sagacity than I suspected, and knows that it would be absolutely a sin to make him a parson, and bury all that sense and spirit in a country vicarage. Why, my good friend, do you not put your son into the army?—that seems to be the profession for which nature has designed him.

Because, answered Somerive, I have, in the first place, no money to buy him a commission; and, if I had, there are two great objections to it:—it would half kill his mother, and take him out of the way of Mrs. Rayland, which appears to be very impolitic.

What if a commission were found for him, said General Tracy, do you think the other objections ought to weigh much? Consider of it, my good friend; and if you think such a plan would be eligible, and the young man himself likes it, perhaps it may be in my power to be of some use to you.

Mr. Somerive warmly expressed his gratitude for the interest his friend seemed to take in the welfare of his Orlando; and then, after a short silence, said: But, my dear General, we forget, while we are planning schemes for the future life of Orlando, it may be terminated to-morrow.

Well, replied he, since I see you cannot conquer your alarm about this matter, and as I am still

more concerned for Mrs. Somerive, I will go over early in the morning to Belgrave, who has wisely appointed the meeting at twelve o'clock, and somehow or other we will get it settled.—If I say to the doughty baronet, that his honour will suffer nothing by dropping it, I am pretty well assured that he will be content to let it go no farther. Make yourself easy, therefore, and go tell your wife that I will take care of her little boy, while I pay my respects to the young ladies whom I see walking in the garden.

Somerive, whose heart was agonized by the distress of his wife, hastened to relieve her; and the General went off at a quick march to overtake the three Miss Somerives, to whom he related some part of the conversation that had passed between him and their father, and the task he had undertaken of settling the affair with Sir John Belgrave.

The sensible hearts of these charming girls were filled with the liveliest emotions towards the General, who, if he could save their brother from danger, which their timidity had dreadfully magnified, they believed would be entitled to their everlasting gratitude. The brilliant eyes of Isabella sparkled with pleasure, while the softer blue eyes of Selina were turned towards him filled with tears of pleasure: and little Emma longed to embrace him, as she used to do her father when he had granted any of her infantine requests. While every one alternately expressed her thanks, Tracy whispered to Isabella, by whose side he was walking: To give the slightest pleasure to my lovely Isabella, I would do infinitely more: and, rather than she should be alarmed, take myself the chance of Sir John Belgrave's fire.

Isabella, too ignorant of the ways of the world

to be either offended or alarmed by such a speech, and naturally pleased by flattery and admiration, smiled on the enamoured General in a manner so fascinating as overpaid him for all the trouble he had taken or proposed to take: and while he meditated against his old friend the greatest injury he could commit, he reconciled himself to it, by determining to do such services to the other part of the family, as would more than compensate for the inroads he might make on its peace by carrying off Isabella; for to carry her off he was resolved, if his art could effect it. His eagerness, however, to serve Orlando, had another motive than this of retribution. He foresaw that so spirited a young man might prevent, or, not being able to do that, would very seriously resent his designs upon a sister: the character of the elder brother, of which he had by this time formed a pretty clear idea, left him little to apprehend from him; but the fiery and impetuous Orlando would, he thought, be much better out of the way.

His conversation with the Miss Somerives now took a gayer turn; and so happy did he feel himself with three such nymphs around him, that he regretted the summons which called them in to attend the tea-table.

Mrs. Somerive, who had now been long in conference with her husband, and afterwards with Orlando, appeared much more cheerful than at dinner, and surveyed the General with those looks of complacency which expressed how much she was obliged to him for the interference he had promised. The evening passed off pleasantly. Orlando staid to supper; but then told his father, that he had some business to do for Mrs. Rayland early the next day (which was true), and therefore he would return to the Hall that evening. Mr. Somerive, who still felt

a dread which he could not conquer, entreated him to give his word of honour, that he would not throw himself in the way of Sir John Belgrave till the hour of that gentleman's appointment. This Orlando (who was ignorant of the plans in agitation to prevent that appointment from taking place at all) thought himself obliged to comply with: on which condition his father, though reluctantly, suffered him at midnight to mount his horse and return to Rayland Hall, where he had desired Betty to sit up for him; fearful of entering through the chapel, lest his doing so should lead to those suspicions he was so desirous of avoiding. As soon as he left his father's door, he put his horse into a gallop, impatient to be with Monimia; and as he crossed the park, he saw a light in her turret, and pleased himself with the idea of her fondly expecting his arrival.

CHAPTER XIV.

Orlando, on his entering the servants' hall found Betty waiting for him as she had promised. Lord, Sir, cried she, as soon as he appeared, I thoft as you'd never come! Why, it's almost half past one o'clock, and I be frighted out of my seven senses sitting up so all alone. I beg your pardon, dear Betty! replied he; but I could not get away sooner; I'll never detain you so long again; and now suffer me to make you what amends I can, by desiring your acceptance of this. He presented her with a crown, which she looked at a moment, and then, archly learing at him, said, Humph! if you give folks a crown for sitting up for you in the kitchen, I suppose they as bides with you in your study have double price.

Come, come, Betty, said Orlando, impatient to escape from her troublesome inquiries, let me hear no more of such nonsense. I have nobody ever in my study, as you know very well. It is very late—I wish you a good night.

He then, without attending to her farther, as she seemed still disposed to talk, took his candle and went to his own apartment; where, after waiting about a quarter of an hour till he thought her retired and the whole house quiet, he took his way to the turret.

Monimia had long expected him, and now received him with joy chastised by the fear which she felt on inquiring into the events of the day. Orlando related to her all that he thought would give her pleasure, and endeavoured that she should understand the affair of the next day settled, for he would not violate truth by positively asserting it; and Monimia, apprehensive of teasing him by her inquiries, stifled as much as she could the pain she endured from this uncertainty. This she found it better to do, as she observed Orlando to be restless and dissatisfied: he complained of the misery he underwent in his frequent absences, and of the unworthy excuses he was compelled to make. He expressed impatiently the long unhappiness he had in prospect, if he could never see her but thus clandestinely, and risking every moment her fame and her peace. Monimia, however, soothed him, by bidding him remember how lately it was that they both thought themselves too happy to meet upon any terms; and would very fain have inspired him with hopes that they might soon look forward to fairer prospects, hopes which he had often tried to give her. But, alas! she could not communicate what she did not feel; and which ever way they cast their eyes, all was despair as to their ever

being united with the consent of those friends on whom they were totally dependent.

Orlando, most solicitous for the peace of Monimia, had never been betrayed before into these murmurings in her presence; forgetting the threatening aspect of the future, while he enjoyed the happiness that was present. But all that had passed during the day, had assisted in making him discontented. His mother's tears and distress, the tender fears of his sisters, and the less evident, but more heavy anxiety which he saw oppressed his father, all contributed to convince him that, in being of so much consequence to his family, he lost the privilege of pleasing himself; that his duty and his inclination must be for ever at variance; and that, if he could resign the hopes of being settled in affluence by Mrs. Rayland, he still could not marry Monimia without making his family unhappy—unless indeed he had the means of providing for her, of which at present there appeared not the least probability. Mrs. Rayland seemed likely to live for many years; or, if she died, it was very uncertain whether she would give him more than a trifling legacy. When he reflected on his situation, he became ashamed of thus spending his life, of wasting the best of his days in the hope of that which might never happen; while Monimia, almost a prisoner in her little apartment, passed the day in servitude, and divided the night between uneasy expectation, hazardous conference, and fruitless tears.

It was these thoughts that gave to Orlando that air of impatience and anxiety, which even in the presence of Monimia he could not so far conquer but that she observed it, before he broke through the restraint he had hitherto imposed on himself, and indulged those fears which he had so often entreated her to check.

At length, however, the hope she affected to feel, the charm of finding himself so fondly beloved, and that his Monimia was prepared to meet any destiny with him, restored him to that temper which he was in when he proposed to brave the discovery of their attachment. With difficulty she persuaded him to leave her about three o'clock. He glided softly down stairs; and when he came out of the lower room of the turret, he found the night so very dark that he could not see his hand. He knew the way, however, so well, that he walked slowly but fearlessly on, and had nearly reached the chapel-door when he found his feet suddenly entangled; and before he could either disengage himself or discover what it was that thus impeded his way, somebody ran against him, whom he seized, and loudly demanded to know who it was.

And who are you? replied a deep surly voice: let me go, or it shall be the worst day's work you ever did in your life.

Orlando, now convinced that he had taken the fellow who had so insolently intruded upon him, and so cruelly alarmed Monimia, felt himself provoked to punish him for his past insolence, and deter him from repeating it: he therefore firmly grasped his prisoner, who seemed a very stout fellow, and who struggled violently for his release—so violently indeed that Orlando, exerting all his strength, threw him down; but, in doing so, the rope which he had at first trod upon being in the way, he fell also: still however he held his antagonist fast, and, kneeling upon him, said resolutely, Whoever you are, I will detain you here till day-light, unless you instantly tell me your name and business.

Curse your strength! replied the fallen foe: if

I was not a little boozy, I'd be d—d before you should have the better of me.

Who are you? again repeated Orlando.

Why, who the plague should I be, cried the man, but Jonas Wilkins;—Ah! Master Orlando, I knows you too now well enough—Come, Sir, let a body go: I know you'd scorn to do a poor man no harm.

Jonas Wilkins! exclaimed Orlando, who knew that to be the name of an outlawed smuggler, famous for his resolution, and the fears in which he was held by the custom-house officers—Jonas Wilkins! And pray, inquired Orlando, releasing him, what may have brought you here, Mr. Jonas Wilkins?

Why, I'll tell you, replied the fellow, for I knows you to be a kind-hearted gentleman, and won't hurt me. The truth of the matter then is—The butler of this here house, Master Pattenson, is engaged a little matter in our business! and when we gets a cargo, he stows it in Madam's cellars, which lays along-side the house, and he have the means to open that door there in the wall, under that there old fig-tree, which nobody knows nothing about. So here we brings our goods until such time as we can carry it safely up the country, and we comes on dark nights to take it away.

And you were here on Monday night, were you not? and came into my room through the chapel?

Yes, that I did sure enough. Aha! Master Orlando! I think we've cotch'd one another.

If that be the case, replied Orlando, it would have been well if we had kept one another's secrets. Why did you speak of having seen one in my room?

Egod, old Pattenson was down in the cellar himself, for we were helping up some heavy goods that night: I don't know what a devil ail'd me, but I

thought I'd just give a look into your room, where, you must know, before you comed to live, we used now and then to put a few kegs or so upon a pinch —and, d—n it! there was you with a pretty girl. Ah, Master Orlando! who'd think you was such a sly one?

Well, but, said Orlando, what occasion was there, Jonas, for your telling Pattenson?

To tease the old son of a b——, answered Jonas. Why don't you know that he's after Betty Richards, and as jealous as poison? So I made him believe 'twas she.

You made him believe!

Aye, for it might be she or another—Curse me if I saw who it was? for you blow'd out the candle, whisk! in a minute.

Orlando, heartily glad to hear this, pursued his inquiry farther. Pray, resumed he, tell me why some person a little while after cried out, Now! now!

Why, we thought that all was quiet; and as I and a comrade of mine was waiting for the goods, we were going to heave them up, and that was the signal—but you were plaguy quick-eared, and began to holla after us! so we were forced to let the job alone till to-night, and Pattenson let us out through the t'other part of the house. We've done the business now, and my comrades they be all off with the goods—I only staid to gather up our tools, because I be going another way.

Orlando, now finding himself thus unexpectedly relieved from the difficulty of accounting for the circumstance of the night of alarm, was far from resenting the resistance his new acquaintance had made, or heeding the pain he felt from some bruises which he had received in the struggle; but being rather pleased at this rencontre, and wishing to

know how far the trade of the worshipful Mr. Pattenson was likely to impede his future meetings with Monimia, he invited Jonas into his room, and told him he could give him, late as it was, a glass of wine.

Jonas accepted his invitation, but desired he might stay to coil up his ropes, which he deposited in the porch, and then followed Orlando, who had taken his hanger from the chimney where it usually hung, and put his pistols, which were both loaded, by him. These precautions were not meant against his guest, whom he did not suspect of any immediate intention to injure him, but to let him see that he was prepared against intrusion, from whatever motive it might be made, at any other time.

When the man made his appearance, Orlando, prepared as he was for the sight of a ruffian, felt something like horror. His dark countenance, shaded by two immense black eyebrows, his shaggy hair, and the fierce and wild expression of his eyes, gave a complete idea of one of Shakspeare's well painted assassins; while in contemplating his athletic form, Orlando wondered how he had been able a moment to detain him. He wore a dirty round frock stained with ochre, which looked like blood, and over it one of those thick great coats which the vulgar call rascal-wrappers. Orlando poured him out a tumbler of wine, and bade him sit down. The fellow obeyed, drank off his wine; and then, after surveying the room, said, turning with a sly look to Orlando, What, master, she ben't here then to-night?

Pooh, pooh! cried Orlando, let's forget that, good Jonas!—your eyes deceived you, there was nobody here: and I assure you it was well you disappeared as you did, or you would have paid for your peeping, shewing one of his pistols.

Aye, aye, answered Jonas, you've got a-pair of bull-dogs, I see;——and I, added he, pulling a pocket-pistol from under his frock, I've a terrier or two about me; and 'twas ten to one, Mr. Orlando, if I had not a given a pretty good guess who it was, that I had not taken you for an officer, and treated you with more sugar plums than would have sat easy upon your stomach.

We are good friends now, however, said Orlando; so drink, Jonas, to our better acquaintance.

He then gave him another full tumbler of wine, and began to question him on his exploits. He found him one of those daring and desperate men, who, knowing they are to expect no mercy, disclaim all hope, and resolutely prey upon the society which has shaken them off. He had been drinking before Orlando met him; and now the wine with which Orlando plied him, and the voice of kindness with which he spoke to him, contributed to open his heart. Jonas disclosed to Orlando all their manœuvres; and it was not without astonishment that he found both Snelcraft the coachman and Pattenson so deeply engaged among the smugglers, and deriving very considerable sums from the shelter they afforded them, and the participation of their illicit gains. Orlando found, that during the whole winter, in weather when no other vessels kept the sea, these adventurous men pursued their voyages, and carried their cargoes through the country in weather when "one's enemy's dog" would hardly be turned from the door.

Orlando, after some consideration on the means of escaping that interruption which this combination among the servants in the house seemed to threaten, told the man, as if in confidence, that under the restraint he was in, in Mrs. Rayland's house, he sometimes found it convenient to go out after the

family were in bed, to meet at a neighbouring town some friends whom Mrs. Rayland disliked he should see: and therefore, said he, I wish, Jonas, that, as I should not wish to interrupt you, you would give me some signal on those nights when you are at work in the cellar.

This the smuggler readily promised, and they agreed upon the sign which should signify the importation or exportation of the merchandise of Mr. Pattenson from the cellars of his mistress.

Orlando, possessing this secret, flattered himself that his very extraordinary acquaintance would keep his word, and that the communication between the study and the apartment of Monimia might once more be open, without making her liable to those terrors from which she had suffered so much.

The man, whom Orlando continued to behold with a mixture of horror and pity, was now nearly overcome with the wine he had drank, and began to tell long prosing stories of his escapes and his exploits, in which he related instances of dauntless courage, tarnished however by brutish ferocity. At length Orlando reminded him that day was soon approaching, and saw him out of the chapel-door, repeating his assurances that nothing of what he had himself that night discovered should transpire. Orlando then fastened the chapel and the other doors, and betook himself to his repose—thinking less about the meeting that was to take place, as he believed, on the morrow, than on the recent discovery he had made, which nearly quieted his terrors in regard to Monimia's having been seen; and he impatiently longed for an opportunity to communicate to her the satisfaction which he hoped she would derive from this assurance.

The late hour at which he had gone to bed, and the fatigue of mind he had experienced the preced-

ing day, occasioned it to be later than usual when Orlando awoke. He started up; and recollecting that he had some writing to finish for Mrs. Rayland, and that he was to meet Sir John Belgrave at twelve o'clock, he hastened to dress himself, and had hardly done so before he received a summons to attend his father, who waited for him as usual in the stable-yard.

He found Mr. Somerive again on horseback, and easily understood that his purpose was to keep him from his appointment, to which however he was positively determined to go. While his father, in a peculiar strain of dejection and concern, was yet talking to him as he leaned on the horse, Mrs. Lennard saw them from one of the windows; and having acquainted her lady, she, contrary to her usual reserved treatment of Mr. Somerive, sent down a very civil message requesting his company with Orlando to breakfast.

This invitation, so flattering because so unusual, was of course accepted. Somerive knew that Mrs. Rayland was acquainted with the affair which hung over him with an aspect so threatening, and hoped that she would unite with him in persuading Orlando to those concessions which might yet afford the means of evading it, if the General's interposition should fail: instead of which, he found her elated with the idea of punishing the audacity of Sir John, fearless of any danger which in the attempt might happen to Orlando, and piquing herself on the supposition that in him had revived a spark of that martial and dauntless spirit which she had been taught to believe characterised the men of her family. She seemed surprised, and somewhat offended, at the alarm Mr. Somerive expressed; and hinted, in no very equivocal terms, that this timidity was the effect of that mixture of

plebeian blood, from the alloy of which only Orlando, of all the family, seemed exempt; while Mr. Somerive, in his return, beheld, with a degree of horror and disgust, a woman who, to gratify her pride or revenge her quarrel, on so trifling a subject, was ready to promote perhaps the death of one for whom she had appeared to feel some degree of affection.

With views and opinions so different, their conference was not likely to be either very long or very satisfactory. Mr. Somerive knew, that when Mrs. Rayland had once taken up an opinion, argument against it offended, but never convinced her; and that in proportion as her reasoning was feeble, her resolution was firm. Thus baffled in his hopes of her effectual interposition, and seeing that Orlando was bent upon keeping his appointment, of which the hour was now at hand, Mr. Somerive sat awhile silent, mortified and wretched— hoping, yet fearing, for the success of the General's interposition, and considering what he should do if it failed.

He had just determined to obtain a warrant immediately, and to put both parties under arrest, when a servant brought to him the following letter:

MY DEAR SIR,

I am now with Sir John Belgrave; and as I know the very natural and tender solicitude which you and your amiable family are under, I lose not a moment in doing myself the pleasure to assure you, that Sir John consents to give the matter up, and that without any concessions from your son that may be derogatory to his honour. If Sir John allows me to say that he is sorry for what has passed, it can surely not be too much for Mr. Orlando to make to him the same concession. I have great satisfaction in communicating to you the

success of my sincere endeavours to be serviceable, and have the honour to be,

My dear Sir,

Your most devoted servant,

CHARLES FERDINAND TRACY.

Mr. Somerive read this billet with a beating heart, apprehensive that the interposition of Mrs. Rayland would prevent Orlando from making even the slight apology which General Tracy dictated; and seeing him restless, and meditating how to escape, he hastily bade Mrs. Rayland good morning; and ordering, in a more peremptory voice than he generally assumed, Orlando to follow him, he left the room; and, as soon as he was alone with his son, put into his hands the letter he had received, at the same time telling him that he must be obeyed in the command he laid upon him, to make immediately the concession required.

Orlando, convinced that he ought to do so, after the appeal he had himself consented to make to the General, assured his father of his obedience. They found, on enquiry, that General Tracy's servant had been sent first to West Wolverton; from whence Mrs. Somerive had, in the most terrifying state of suspense, hastened him to Rayland Hall, where he now waited. Orlando therefore attended his father into his own room; where being furnished with pen and ink, Mr. Somerive wrote to the General in those terms that appeared requisite, and to which Orlando did not object. The letter was then instantly dispatched by the servant: and thus ended an affair which had so much disturbed the peace of the Somerive family, and threatened consequences still more painful. Somerive now ordered his son to return to Mrs. Rayland, shew her the General's letter, and inform her that the bu-

siness was ended as much to his honour, as her highest notions of what was due to a descendant of Sir Hildebrand (whose blood was less alloyed than that of the rest of his family) could exact. Somerive said this with some degree of asperity; for, though pleased with the partiality of Mrs. Rayland for Orlando, he could not but feel the contempt she expressed towards himself. He told Orlando he expected him to dinner, and then returned home; his mind relieved from an intolerable load, and his heart swelling with gratitude towards his excellent friend General Tracy.

CHAPTER XV.

Every one of the party who met at dinner, at Mr. Somerive's, were ready to worship the General, except Orlando, who still felt himself dissatisfied, and much disposed to inquire by what conversation an accommodation had been so easily brought about. This inquiry, however, he, at his father's request, forbore to make, and the General was perfectly satisfied with the gratitude expressed by the rest of the family; and in the distant, but polite behaviour of Orlando, saw, what confirmed him in his original idea, that it would be much better if he was out of the way.—The charms of Isabella had now such an ascendency in the General's imagination, that he determined nothing should impede his designs; and he believed that the straitened circumstances of Somerive, of which he was no longer ignorant, would give him the means of obtaining his daughter.

Somerive had indeed communicated to him, as a friend, the uneasy situation of his affairs, and de-

plored the conduct of his eldest son. At their next conference therefore alone, Tracy contrived, without forcing the conversation, to bring it round to that point; and when Somerive spoke of the distress which arose from the misconduct of his son Philip, the General took occasion to say, It is indeed, my friend, a circumstance extremely to be lamented—and, in my opinion, renders the situation of your youngest son much more critical. I heartily wish he was in some profession. Have you considered what I said to you about the army? —I believe I could be of very material service to you in that line.

Dear General, exclaimed Somerive, how much I feel myself indebted to you: Yes, I certainly have thought of it; and the result of my reflections is, that if his mother consented, if Mrs. Rayland did not object.——

My good friend, interrupted the General, can a man of your understanding, when the well-doing of such a son is in question, think that these *ifs* should have any weight? Mrs. Somerive, all tender as she is, has too much sense to indulge her fondness at the expense of her son's establishment; and as to Mrs. Rayland—I have not indeed the honour to know her—but the only question seems to be, will she, or will she not, provide for Orlando? *If* she will, why will she not say so? If she will not, are not you doing your son an irreparable injury, in suffering him to waste in fruitless expectation the best of his days?

It is very difficult, replied Mr. Somerive, after musing a moment, very difficult to know how to act: Mrs. Rayland has a temper so peculiar, that if she is once offended, it is for ever. Perhaps, however, since I see she piques herself on the military honours of her family, perhaps she may not be

displeased at Orlando's entering on the profession of arms. She seemed much more eager to promote than to check his ardour in this affair with Sir John Belgrave: and as the British nation is now engaged in a quarrel with people whom she considers as the descendants of the Regicides, against whom her ancestors drew their swords, it is not, I think, very unlikely that she might approve of her young favorite's making his first essay in arms against those whom she terms the Rebels of America.

As to that, answered the General coldly, it may be very well in starting the idea, to give her that notion; but in fact this campaign will end the unworthy contest. Of this I have the most positive assurances from my military friends on the spot, as well as the greatest reliance on the measures adopted by ministers; and I am convinced that those wretched, ragged fellows, without discipline, money, clothes, or arms, will be unable longer to struggle for their chimerical liberty. Probably they are by this time crushed; and therefore as no more troops will be sent out, your son will not, if you adopt this plan, be separated from his family, and may still occasionally visit this capricious old gentlewoman, who, unless she differs much from the rest of her sex, of all ages and descriptions, will not like a handsome young fellow the less for having a cockade in his hat.

Ah, General! returned Somerive, smiling, I fancy your own experience among the women well justifies that remark. Since you really are so sure that Orlando would not be sent abroad, which will make a great difference certainly in his mother's feelings on this point, and perhaps in those of Mrs. Rayland, I will take an immediate opportunity of speaking of it to my wife, and we will consider of the safest method of taking Mrs. Rayland's opinion upon it.

As to Orlando himself, there can be little doubt of his concurrence; at least I hope not. And there are other reasons, my friend, besides those that I have named to you, why his present situation is utterly improper, and why it seems to me that he cannot too soon be removed from it.

Mr. Somerive, in speaking thus, was thinking of Monimia, who, ever since he had first heard her described, had occurred to him continually. The necessity there was for attending immediately to the affair of the threatened duel, had hitherto prevented his speaking of her to Orlando, in that serious manner which he thought the affair merited: but he had repeatedly touched on it; and finding Orlando shrink from the investigation, he laid in wait for an occasion to probe him more deeply—an occasion which, perceiving his father sought it, Orlando as solicitously endeavoured to avoid giving him, by contriving to be always busied in attending on his sisters or his mother; but while he thus got out of the way of his father, he was very much in that of the General, who could hardly ever get an opportunity of whispering to Isabella those sentiments which daily acquired new force. For, the week following that when the affair with Sir John Belgrave was settled, Orlando could find no excuse for returning to Rayland Hall of a night: he was therefore reduced to the necessity of going thither after his own family were in bed; and as the way through the chapel was not open to him, he could only see Monimia in her own room, and their meetings were therefore very short, and so hazardous, that the impatience and discontent of Orlando could no longer be repressed or concealed.

The greater his attachment to Monimia became (and every hour it seemed to gather strength), the more terrible appeared her situation, and his own.

They were both so young that he thought he might easily obtain an establishment, and that the noon of their lives might pass in felicity together, were he, instead of remaining in a state of uncertain dependence, to be allowed to go forth into the world. Sanguine and romantic in the extreme, and feeling within himself talents which he was denied the power of exercising, his mind expatiated on visionary prospects, which he believed might easily be realized. When to provide for passing his life with Monimia was in question, every thing seemed possible; and as he heard much of the rapid fortunes made in India, and had never considered, or perhaps heard of the means by which they were acquired, he fancied that an appointment there would put him in the high road to happiness; and various were the projects of this and of many other kinds, on which his thoughts continually dwelt.

General Tracy, who had long read mankind, easily penetrated into the mind of a man so new to the world as Orlando; and though he saw that his young friend did not greatly esteem him, he was not by that observation deterred from conciliating as much as possible his good opinion, till at length Orlando communicated his discontent at being at his time of life so inactive and useless; and the General, having brought him to that confession, started the scheme he had before proposed only to his father, of procuring him a commission, and lending him all the interest which he was known to possess to promote his fortune in the army.

A proposal so friendly, and so much adapted to the warm and ardent temper of Orlando, was acknowledged with gratitude, and without farther consideration embraced, on condition that his family did not oppose it. The General told him, that it was in consequence of his father's apparent incli-

nations that he had at first thought of it; that his mother had certainly too much sense to reject such an advantageous offer for him; especially, added he, as from the present state of the war, there is not the least likelihood of your being sent abroad. — You know best, however, my dear Sir, continued the General, with something on his countenance between a smile and a sneer—you know best how far your campaigns against the game on the Rayland manors may answer better than the services of a soldier, or whether the old lady's hands can bestow a more fruitful prize than the barren laurels you may gather in bearing arms for your country.

There was in this speech something that conveyed to Orlando an idea that he was despised; and that there was meanness in his attending on Mrs. Rayland like a legacy hunter—of all characters the most despicable. The blood that rushed into his cheeks, spoke the painful sensations this impression brought with it. He could not, however, express them with propriety to a man whose only purpose seemed to be that of befriending him, by rousing him from indolence, and even from a species of servitude. The General saw that what he said had the effect he wished; and Orlando left him, determined to avail himself of the opportunity that now offered for obtaining what he believed would be a degree of independence. He began to consider how he might prevail on Mrs. Rayland to assist instead of opposing this scheme; and how he might thus obtain a certain portion of liberty, without offending one to whom gratitude and interest contributed to attach him. A deep and painful sigh, raised by the reflection of the misery of parting from Monimia, followed the resolution he adopted; but he recollected that by no other means he could remove the cruel obstacles between them, and that resolution became confirmed.

He had not yet, however, the courage to communicate to her the probability there was that they must soon part. Their short conferences, in every one of which they incurred the hazard of discovery, passed, on her side, in mournful presentiments of future sorrow, which she yet endeavoured to conceal; and on his, in trying, now to console her, and now in acknowledging that there was but too much cause for her fears: projects were considered, however, for their future meetings with less risk. She told him, that during the time he was so much at home, her aunt confined her less strictly through the day; that in proportion as she found herself become more necessary to Mrs. Rayland, and more secure of a great provision after her death, Mrs. Lennard became more indolent, and more addicted to her own gratifications. Betty, who was a very great favourite, had little else to do than to wait upon her; an employment in which Monimia herself was often engaged, though she was now more usually employed about the person of Mrs. Rayland, who found her so tender and attentive that she began to look upon her with some degree of complacency. This task, while it added a heavy link to her fetters, she yet went through, not only with patience; but with pleasure; for she hoped that by making herself useful to Mrs. Rayland, she might not only have more frequent opportunities of seeing Orlando during the winter, which she imagined he would pass at the Hall, but perhaps obtain from her such a share of recollection at her death, as might remove the necessity of an entire dependence on Mrs. Lennard; a dependence which some late observations had made her believe as precarious as she felt it to be painful.

In consequence of General Tracy's visit to Sir John Belgrave at the house of Mr. Stockton, he

received from the master of it an invitation, which he accepted; Mr. Stockton first waiting upon him at West Wolverton—Sir John, and Philip Somerive, with several others of the late visitants at the Castle, were gone into Scotland on a shooting party; but Mr. Stockton had a succession of visitors.—His magnificent style of living, which it was known he had a fortune to support, attracted not only all his London friends by turns to his house, but from every part of the country acquaintance poured in upon him; acquaintance who desired nothing better, in the way of entertainment, than his French cook and his well furnished cellars afforded them.—The Clergy were his very constant guests; and he loved to have two or three of them always about him, at whom he might launch those shafts of wit which he had picked up here and there, and which consisted of common-place jokes upon religion; well knowing that with these select few (orthodox as they were), the excellence of the entertainment he gave them secured their silence and complaisance.

The General, who was in manners really a man of fashion, was by no means delighted with the gross and noisy society he found at Stockton's: but he saw that if he would escape suspicion, he must not make his visit at Somerive's too long; and, therefore, was glad to be assured that there was an house in the immediate neighbourhood, where he might remain a fortnight or three weeks, after prudence dictated his departure from that of Mr. Somerive; which he now feared must happen before his hopes with Isabella were successful, for he found it much more difficult to obtain any degree of favour, than his own vanity and her giddiness had at first led him to suppose.

Isabella Somerive was not naturally a coquette: but she had a greater flow of spirits than any of her

family, except her elder brother, whom she greatly resembled in the thoughtless vivacity of his disposition; from her sex and education, what was in him attended with dangerous errors, was in her only wild but innocent gaiety, becoming enough to youth, health and beauty. Of that beauty she had early learned the value: she had heard it praised at home, and found her father and mother were pleased to hear of it. But during her short stay in London she had been intoxicated with the incense that was offered her; and, notwithstanding the good humour inherent in her disposition, she failed not to enjoy, with some degree of feminine triumph, the preference that was given her over her cousins, whose admirers seemed all disposed to desert them on the first appearance of this rustic beauty; and she felt, too, the pleasure of retaliation for all the airs of consequence which the Miss Woodfords had assumed in their visits to West Wolverton, from their superior knowledge of fashions, public places, and great people. But, above all, Isabella was delighted by the preference given her by a judge so discerning as General Tracy—whose taste in beauty was so universally allowed, that his admiration had given eminence to several pretty women, who would never otherwise have been noticed. Far however from thinking of him as a lover, Isabella, who was, with all her vivacity, as innocent as little Emma herself, considered him merely as her father's friend, and would have applied to him for advice, in as much expectation of receiving it with disinterested wisdom, as to her father himself. The fine speeches he took every opportunity of making, she believed partly arose from habit, and were partly proofs of his admiration; which she thought perfectly harmless, though it sometimes struck her as ridiculous. And in conversation with her sisters,

and sometimes with her mother, she laughingly called the General—her old beau—her venerable admirer, and said she wished he was thirty years younger. Mrs. Somerive sometimes checked her; but oftener smiled at the description she gave of the General's solemn gallantry, and of the trouble she knew his toilet cost him; which really, cried she, grieves one's very heart. Poor man! it must be excessively fatiguing; and after all, I think he would be a thousand times more agreeable, if he could be persuaded to appear as my father and other men do, of the same age.—Instead of putting on toupees and curls, which it requires so much art and time to make sit snug and look natural, how preferable would a good comfortable wig be to his poor old head! which I am sure must ache sadly every day before Beaumielle has patched up the gaps that time has made!—and, besides, I know he is always in fear of some of this borrowed chevelure's coming off, and disgracing him; I have absolutely seen him nervous about it.—Dear Isabella, said Mrs. Somerive, who was present at this description, how you run on! The General, I dare say, has no false hair; and if he has, how does it materially differ from a wig!

Oh mamma! replied her daughter, I believe it differs so much in the General's opinion, that he had rather have his head cut off than his hair. A wig! I have seen him shudder at the idea.

You have seen him! said Mrs. Somerive: pray when?

The other day when he rode out with us. There was a terrible high wind, and I knew the ancient beau would be ten times more discomposed by it than we were—So, as soon as we got upon the downs, I set off with a brisk canter directly against

it; and the poor dear General was obliged, you know, to follow us.—

Well?

Well—and so he buttoned up the cape of his great coat round his ears, and set off after us; but as ill fortune would have it, this cape, I suppose. loosened the strings of his curls, and the wind blew so unmercifully that he did not hear of their defection from his ears; but as he came galloping up to me and Selina, who were a good way before him, these ill behaved curls deserted, and were flying, like two small birds tied by the leg, half a yard behind him; and if he had been commander of a town suddenly blown up by the enemy, he could not have looked more amazed and dismayed, than he did when I called out to him—General! General! your curls are flying away!—He put up his hand to his two ears alternately, and finding it too true that these cowardly curls had left their post, and were retained only by a bit of black twist, he gave them a twitch, and thrust them into his pocket—while he said most dolorously, Ever since that fever I got last year by overheating myself walking with the King at Windsor, I have lost my hair in some degree: and till it is restored I am under the necessity of wearing these awkward contrivances. Dear General, said I, as if I pitied his distress, I am afraid you will catch cold without them. Had you not better wrap a handkerchief about your head? I am sure you must feel a difference—I am in pain for you!—It is, indeed, an awkward contrivance; and I should think you would find more comfortable and certain accommodation in a wig.

A wig! exclaimed he—a military man in a wig! —like a turtle-eating cit, or a Stock-Exchange broker!—Impossible!—No! lovely Isabella, you can never suppose I ought to make myself such a

figure; and I assure you I have, when not hurt by illness, a very tolerable head of hair.

For your time of life, General! said I.—This completed the poor good man's dismay; and he set about assuring me, that the military hardships he had gone through in the younger part of his life, and perhaps a little irregularity since, made him look at least fifteen years older than he was, and so went on making such fine speeches as he thinks becoming in so *young* a man.

Upon my word, Isabella, remarked Mrs. Somerive, you will offend the General by all this flippancy; and your father, I assure you, would not be at all pleased if you should.

No, indeed, my dear mamma! answered she, there is no danger of my offending him. The rattling speeches I make to him, and even my turning him into ridicule when only Selina and I are by, is so far from offending him, that he seems to like it. —Does not he, Selina?

It is not right, however, in my opinion, said Selina?

Why not, if you please, my lady Graveairs?

Because I do not think a person's age, replied Selina, a proper subject of ridicule.

No, answered Isabella—not if they do not make it so, by attempting to appear young; but how is it possible to help laughing at a man who fancies that, at sixty, he can pass for six-and-twenty.

If it is the General's foible, said Mrs. Somerive gravely, it seems to be the only one; and it makes him happy, and hurts nobody. He is so worthy a man, that it is immaterial whether he is sixty or six-and-twenty; and if he has the weakness to prefer being thought the latter, which, however, Isabella, you know is not true, he should not be rudely reminded that nobody else thinks so.

Well, if this worthy man will flirt with and make love to girls young enough to be his grand-daughters, I must laugh, if it *be* wrong, cried Isabella.

Make love! exclaimed Mrs. Somerive: What do you mean, child?

Why—only mamma, that if he were a young man, the marvellously fine speeches he studies would seem like love-making speeches. I told him the other day, that since he thought me so very charming a creature, I wished he would persuade his nephew to be of the same opinion, for there would be some sense in that.

His nephew!—Who is his nephew? inquired her mother.

I never saw him, replied Isabella; but Eliza Woodford has often, and says he is the most elegant and the handsomest young man about town.

Do you mean, said Mrs. Somerive, the son of his elder brother, Lord Taymouth?

Oh! not at all—he is a miserable looking mortal!—No, this nephew, as Eliza tells me, is the only son of his sister, Lady Something Tracy, who married a Mr. Warwick, who, though a gentleman, her family thought was a match so much beneath her, that they never forgave her; and as she and her husband both died early, this young man, who was their only child, and had a very small fortune, was brought up by the General, who means to make him his heir.

He is a good creature, said Mrs. Somerive; and every thing I hear increases my esteem for him.

You would consent then, my dear mamma, replied Isabella, to my having Captain Warwick?

Alas! answered her mother mournfully, Captain Warwick, my dear girl, heir to the fortune of General Tracy, will never, I fear, *ask* my consent. Young women without fortune, though their merit be indisputable, are not likely now to marry at all; very unlikely, indeed, to meet with such high fortune.

I don't see that at all, cried Isabella. Selina and Emma may determine to die old maids if they please; but, for my part, I'll try, as long as I am young and good-looking, for a husband; and as to this Warwick, I am bent upon setting my cap at him without mercy, if his uncle would but give me an opportunity. That he will not do; for though he is so good to him, and gives him such an handsome allowance, he hardly ever sees him; and has bought him a company in another regiment, rather than have him in his own, and so he is sent off to America—and——

You have no chance then, interrupted Mrs. Somerive, of trying your power, Isabella?

No! cried she; but it is excellent sport to tease his uncle about him, who always avoids talking of him, just like a coquettish Mamma, who hates to hear that Miss is tall and handsome.

Mrs. Somerive, again gently reproving her daughter for speaking thus of the General, put an end to the conversation by sending her daughters away to dress for dinner; while she meditated alone on what her husband had that morning said to her on the subject of Orlando's entering the army. He had now, for the first time, explained to her all the reasons he had for wishing his son removed from Rayland Hall; and had communicated the principal of these, his suspicions of an attachment to Monimia. Mrs. Somerive felt all the truth of what her husband urged in favour of this plan;

and, particularly uneasy at the information he had given her about Monimia, she now tried to reason herself out of those fears for his personal safety, which yet led her to wish he might remain, on whatever terms, near her and his family.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE family of Somerive was almost the only one in the country, or at least within five and twenty miles, who had not waited on Mr. Stockton after his purchasing the estates of Lord Carloraine. For this Mr. Somerive had several reasons. Though he disdained any mean compliances with the caprices of Mrs. Rayland, he thought it wrong to connect himself with a man who, on his first appearance in the country, had offended her unhandsomely enough; and he knew it would not only be impolitic in regard to her, but to the economy of his own family. His servants, plain and laborious, were at present content with their portion of work and of wages; but were they once introduced into such a servant's hall as that of the Castle, where the same profusion reigned as was customary in the parlour, he knew they would immediately become discontented, and of course troublesome and useless. The people whom he found were generally assembled at the Castle, most of them young men, celebrated for their dissolute manners, were not such as he wished to have introduced to his daughters. And these causes co-operating to make him wish to avoid every acquaintance with Mr. Stockton, he had taken some pains to prevail on his eldest son to avoid it also; but Philip Somerive, who had some slight knowledge of Stockton

in London, hastened, in spite of his father's remonstrances, to renew and strengthen it as soon as he settled in the neighbourhood, and was very soon more at Stockton's than at home. The simple economy of his father's house appeared to him a total deprivation of all that a gentleman ought to enjoy; and when contrasted with the voluptuous epicurism that reigned in the splendid mansion of his new friend, he had not the courage to return to it oftener than want of money compelled him to do: and he forgot that to these temporary gratifications he was sacrificing the peace of his father, his mother, and his sisters; and laying up for himself all the miseries of indigence, and all the meannesses of dependence.

It was here he confirmed, by indulgence, that passion for play which he had acquired at college. The party at Carloraine Castle passed whole nights in gaming, where young Somerive often lost, but, alas! sometimes won; and in the triumph of his success, the pain and inconvenience of his ill fortune was forgotten. He learned some of those modes of ascertaining the matter, which he saw so happily practised by others; and, after some time, became, in some measure, one of the initiated, and had, in consequence, seldom occasion to apply to his father for money—therefore he seldom went near him: sometimes whole months therefore passed, during which his family never saw him, though they knew that much of his time was passed with Mr. Stockton, whom this circumstance contributed to render odious to Mr. Somerive.

After the acquaintance, however, commenced betwen Stockton and the General, Somerive found it very difficult to keep the same distance; and Stockton, who had a great inclination to see Some-

rive's handsome daughters, of whom he had heard so much, was so importunately civil, while General Tracy, on the other hand, promoted the acquaintance so warmly, that Somerive and Orlando engaged to dine with Stockton on one of those days when he had invited half the county. The latter went with extreme reluctance; not only because what he had heard of the man himself, and of the people who surrounded him, gave no favourable idea of the society; but because he thought it wrong to hazard offending Mrs. Rayland, in a point which, to pursue, afforded no pleasure either to his father or himself. Neither of these reasons for denial, however, could be urged to the General, who he thought already despised him for his assiduity about the old lady; and as his father had been induced to consent, Orlando could not refuse to accompany him.

The table was furnished with all that modern luxury has invented, or money could purchase; the greatest variety of expensive wines, and a superb dessert, finished a repast, at which were collected a group as various as their entertainment, though not so well chosen. The beginning of the dinner was passed in that sort of talk which relates solely to eating: when that exercise relaxed, something like an attempt at conversation was made. The last news from America was discussed; but as they all agreed in one sentiment—that the rebellious colonists ought to be extirpated—there was no room for argument, and the discourse soon languished; and then again revived on topics nearer home—game, poachers, and turnpikes: the wine had by that time circulated enough to give their conversation, if conversation it might be called, another turn. They grew noisy and offensive; and Orlando,

who was never before among such a set of people, nor had ever in his life heard such language, was unable to conceal his disgust, though he only shewed it by silence, and by passing from him the bottle, which he saw had so affected the little understanding that the majority of the company had possessed.

This was at length perceived by Mr. Stockton, who, accustomed to indulge himself in what he fancied shrewd sayings, and to expect that every man not so rich as himself should submit to be his butt, began to attack Orlando on the score of his being a milksop, and living always in the lap of the old lady at the Hall.—To this Orlando answered with good humour, perfectly indifferent what such a man as Stockton thought of him; but the latter seeing how well he bore this first attack, could not resist the temptation of pursuing his blow. Why, damn it now! cried he, we know very well, Sir Rowland (that was the name which Philip Somerive gave to his brother in derision) we know very well that you are no more of a saint than your neighbours; and that though you are in waiting on an old woman all day, you make yourself amends at night with a young one—aye, and a devilish pretty wench she is too as ever I saw. —Egad! Belgrave was half mad about her for a week, and had a mind to have stormed the tower where this dulcinea lives, notwithstanding its being guarded by the fierce Sir Rowland.—I don't know her name.—Tell me, Sir Knight, how is your goddess called? and by the Lord we'll drink her health in a bumper!

Mr. Somerive, who saw in the changes of Orlando's expressive countenance, that his answer would inevitably bring on another quarrel, arose hastily, and, addressing himself to Mr. Stockton, while he commanded Orlando to be silent, he said:

After what passed, Mr. Stockton, in regard to Sir John Belgrave and my son, this mention of the affair can only be considered as an insult to us both. If that be your purpose, some other place than your own house should have been found for it. We will now quit it, in order to give you an opportunity of pursuing your design, without adding the breach of the laws of hospitality to those of decency and good manners.

Somerive then taking Orlando by the arm, insisted on his going with him; while the General, and some other men in the room, who were yet in possession of their senses, got round Stockton, who was very drunk, and represented how wrong it was to renew the conversation on Sir John Belgrave; an affair which had been settled with so much difficulty, and had threatened such serious consequences. The profession, birth, and riches of General Tracy, gave him great authority in the opinion of even the wealthy and insolent Stockton himself; and as he loved his ease, even beyond the indulgence of his purse-proud arrogance, he saw at once, that in gratifying the one, he had, more than he intended, risked the other. He therefore sent one of his dependents to apologise to the two Somerives, who had already left the room: General Tracy too went to assure them of Stockton's concern for what had passed; excused it by alleging his inebriety, and declared that he should think both Mr. Somerive and his son wrong to take any further notice of the idle words of a man who was himself convinced of their impropriety. We will talk of all this at our leisure, dear General, replied the elder Somerive: at present you must allow me to take Orlando from an house, into which I am heartily concerned that either of us ever entered.

I will go with you, my dear friend, cried the

General; but first allow me to return to poor Stockton, who is extremely concerned for what has happened, and to tell him———

Any thing you please from yourself, Sir, said Orlando, interrupting him; but nothing from me, unless it be———

Leave the matter to *me*, Orlando, cried Somerive sternly. You know, General, added he, addressing himself to his friend, how little it can be my wish to have this ridiculous matter go any farther; but as I never yet bore a premeditated insult myself, so I will not ask Orlando to do it, be the consequences what they may.

Good God! exclaimed the General, this was no premeditated insult; it was merely the folly of a man in a condition which disarms resentment, even from those of the most quick feelings.

He must tell me so himself, then, said Orlando.

I will undertake that he shall, answered the General; and so you leave the house satisfied I hope?

To this the elder Somerive answered drily: Blessed are the peacemakers, my good General! and then, leaving him to return, if he pleased, to his new friends, he mounted his horse, which, with that of Orlando's, his servants had brought to the door, and they proceeded homeward together.

This was the opportunity of speaking to Orlando, that his father had been some days watching for, and the scene that had just passed, awakening all his fears about Monimia, was an additional motive to him not to neglect it.

Orlando, whose heart was bursting with indignation at the insult offered to her name, rode silently by his side, expecting, with a mixture of concern and confusion, that his father would again press him on his attachment. He was studying, without

being able to determine, how he should answer. He had never been guilty of a falsehood; and could he now reconcile himself to the meanness of attempting one, he believed it would be fruitless; yet, to betray the tender, trusting, timid Monimia—to acknowledge their clandestine meetings, which his father might not be persuaded were innocent—and to render himself liable to be forbidden ever again to see her—how was it possible to determine on risking it, by an avowal of the truth? There was not much time for this painful debate. Mr. Somerive put his horse into a walk, and then said, in that grave and earnest manner which always affected his son—

You see, Orlando, all the mischief to which this boyish and indiscreet love of yours has exposed, not only yourself, but the young woman, who is, unluckily for her, the object of it.

Love, Sir! said Orlando, not knowing very well what to say.

Nay, Sir, cried Somerive more sternly, don't affect ignorance; you have been playing the fool with that young girl that Lennard passes for her niece. Answer me honestly—have you not?

No, Sir—never.

Have a care, young man—I can pardon the follies of youth, but premeditated falsehood I never will forgive.

Be so good then, my dear father, to explain precisely your meaning; and when I perfectly understand the charge, I will answer it as truly as if I were on oath.

The girl is handsome? said Somerive.

Certainly, answered Orlando.

And you have informed her of it no doubt.

Pardon me, Sir, I never have; and I believe she is at this moment unconscious of it.

Really! that is wonderful. She is employed, I think, in the house as a kind of under housekeeper.

No, Sir; but she sometimes undertakes part of her aunt's business when she is engaged or indisposed, and sometimes attends Mrs. Rayland.

And lives, I suppose, as Lennard does, in the parlour with the Lady?

Very rarely, Sir; and as a matter of great favour, she dines there: rather oftener, though still not regularly, is allowed to drink tea in the parlour.

Humph!—and at other times, I suppose, she takes her seat at the table allowed Snelcraft and Pattenson: the latter worthy man is celebrated, I think, for his various and successful amours under the roof of my very pious kinswoman. This poor girl, I suppose, is in the way of adding to the trophies of that excellent and faithful servant. Upon my word, Orlando, you may find him a very formidable rival.

Gracious Heaven, Sir! cried Orlando, who could not bear even the supposition, what mistaken notions you have formed of Monimia!

Monimia! exclaimed Somerive, who, serious as the matter was, could not help smiling: Monimia!—why thou art far gone, my poor boy, since thou hast found such a name for thy nymph—Monimia! I must be allowed, since we are talking plainly of the matter, to call her Mary.

You may call her what you please, Sir, replied Orlando very impatiently, so as you do justice to her innocence and goodness. Suffer me to speak, Sir, added he, finding his father about to interrupt him—suffer me to declare to you, that not one of your own daughters, my sisters, whom I so tenderly love, are more innocent, or more worthy of respect and esteem, and let me add, of admiration, than this young woman.

Indeed! is that your opinion? Pray, Orlando,

what means have you had of being so well informed of all these perfections, which you are so willing to put in comparison with those of your own family?

Continual experience, amounting to perfect conviction.

Truly that 's marvellous, considering this young person, according to your own account a servant, so seldom drinks tea, and so much seldomer dines with Mrs. Rayland, where, I suppose, she is not allowed any great share of the conversation, even when she *is* admitted;—though you are willing to put her on a level with your sisters, I suppose you hardly so practised this levelling principle on yourself, as to pursue your studies of this miracle to the table of the great Snelcraft, and greater Pattenson.

No, Sir, retorted Orlando warmly; nor does Monimia ever sit at that table.

May I then ask, without offending this lady, whose *nom de guerre* is I find *settled* to be Monimia —where you have seen enough of her to form a judgment so much in her favour?

That may be done by seeing her once. You yourself, my dear father! added Orlando extremely moved, if you were once to see her, would not blame me for what I have said. Indeed you would not: you would own that she is all I have described.

Poor boy! cried Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh; at your age I remember thinking just the same of a very handsome girl. I too have had my Monimia! my Celinda, my Leonora; and many were the heart-aches these beauties gave me hould, therefore, continued he, in a more solemn tone—I should, therefore, my dear Orlando! pass over this juvenile passion, and not even inquire about it, if, from the peculiarity of your situation, and that

of the young woman, as well as from your tendency to romantic quixotism, which perhaps I have too much encouraged, I did not fear that it may end more seriously. She is very pretty! and you are very young, and very much in love! If she is innocent——

If! Good God, Sir, what shall I say to convince you of it?

Nothing, Orlando; speak simply the truth, and I will attend to you: allow me to finish the sentence—If she is innocent and amiable, as you *believe* her to be, you would not certainly destroy that innocence? you would not render her unamiable?

Not for a million of worlds! cried Orlando eagerly.

Well, then, Orlando, in order to reconcile your honour with that love which it seems you do not affect to deny, it follows that you would marry her?

Most undoubtedly, Sir, I would.

To throw yourself out for ever from every hope of favour on the part of Mrs. Rayland; and, while you render your own family miserable, to entail poverty for life on the woman you love, and her children?

I know it all but too well; permit me, however, Sir, to say, that as to my family, *I* do not see why they should make themselves miserable about it, since the morals, the manners, the person of my wife, could be no disgrace to them: and if I chose to work for her, surely I have a right to live with whom I please.

To work! cried Somerive angrily. How work?—you who are in no profession, and could not even support yourself?

Pardon me, Sir, answered Orlando, and let it not offend you, if I say, that a young man of almost one and twenty, six feet high, and in perfect health,

must be a very contemptible wretch, indeed, if he is unable to obtain a provision for himself, and to provide for his wife.

Wild and ridiculous! exclaimed Somerive. If you were twelve feet high, and had as many hands as Briareus, how could you employ them? you who have been brought up to nothing, who know nothing——

That, Sir, is my misfortune—surely not my fault.

I allow it. It is a misfortune to which I see other misfortunes are annexed, if a remedy be not instantly found. I perceive, Orlando, that this matter, on which it is plain you have thought deeply, is likely to be even more serious than I apprehended. I must find a profession for you, which shall take you out of a situation so hazardous. I understood General Tracy, that if a commission could be obtained, you expressed no disinclination to enter the army?

Certainly I do not.—And let my readiness, or rather my eagerness to embrace that offer convince you, Sir, that whatever may be my future hopes, I do not mean to involve Monimia in my present difficulties, nor to aspire to happiness till I have earned it. Put me, Sir, instantly to the proof. Procure for me a commission, or send me out a volunteer. You shall not find me shrink from any task you may impose upon me. But, in return, I expect not to be compelled to resign the hope that will alone animate me—I love Monimia passionately; I shall always love her; and I will not promise to resign her for ever.

I shall leave all that to time and absence, answered Somerive; and insist on nothing but that you will join with me in prevailing on Mrs. Rayland to hear of your entering into the army without dissatisfaction. Though I wish you to have the

means of being in some degree independent, it were folly to forfeit needlessly your expectations from her. Try, therefore, so to manage this as to obtain her consent.

Mrs. Rayland will not, I really believe, oppose it, said Orlando.

Try her, answered his father; on your sincerity in doing so I shall rely: and remember, Orlando, that if from any other artful quarter attempts are made to persuade her against consenting to this plan, I have only to inform her of your curious plan of marrying her housekeeper's niece, and put her upon inquiring into the intrigue you are carrying on, and you would be banished for ever from Rayland Hall.

There would be as little wisdom in that, Sir, said Orlando with great warmth, as there is truth in imputing an intrigue or art to Monimia. However, you are to do as you please.

And you, Sir, retorted Somerive warmly, seem to think yourself authorized to say what you please.—Let not my indulgence, which has ruined your brother, and now I see is likely to be your destruction; let not my indulgence hitherto, lead you to depend too much upon it. You shall find, Sir, that if you are ungrateful and undutiful, I can be harsh, and can make myself obeyed. But here, for the present, I desire to end the discourse. We are near home, and I will not have your mother made uneasy, either by the report of what happened to-day at dinner, or by any knowledge of your folly, which has not yet reached her. I shall go immediately to my study; and I recommend it to you to go to your own room, and not appear to-night; for your mother, you know well, is so accustomed to penetrate into my thoughts and yours, that she

will not fail to perceive that something is wrong—and she shall not be rendered unhappy.

Orlando, most willing to obey his father in this respect, made no other answer than wishing him a good night; and as soon as he dismounted at home, he retired to his own room, and, with mingled sensations of resentment and sorrow, of anger and despondency, began to reflect on what had passed during the day. The insolent language used by Stockton stung him to the soul. He saw too evidently, that his nightly meetings with Monimia were suspected, if not known—known to the unprincipled and profligate Stockton, who had put the most odious construction on the conduct of the innocent Monimia. Yet he was compelled also to allow, that whatever might be the suspicions or opinions concerning her, he could not avenge or defend her, without being too well assured that consequences must ensue still more fatal to her. If their intercourse was once suspected by Mrs. Rayland, he knew that Monimia would be dismissed with disgrace; that she would probably be abandoned by her aunt, and thrown upon the world, where he had not the power of protecting her from poverty, though he might guard her from insult. The only comfort he had was, that his father, when his interrogatories seemed most hardly to press him to declare how and where he met Monimia, had been diverted to other discourse; that he had, therefore, not been reduced either to tell him a falsehood, or to betray the secret of the door which admitted him to the turret; a secret of which he yet hoped to avail himself, in the interval that must occur between the time of his returning to the Hall and his departure for the army, which he now saw was certain. He felt no wish more ardent than

that of reconciling his Monimia to his going, exchanging with her mutual vows of eternal affection, and setting forth in the certainty of her remaining under the protection of Mrs. Lennard, and in the hope that he should return in a situation that might enable him to ask her hand, and to render her subsequent life as happy as the fondest love and competent fortune could make it. But Orlando saw too plainly, that if his evening conferences were known to his father, he would, at whatever risk of ruining him for ever with Mrs. Rayland, put an end to them; and, therefore, as more caution than ever was requisite, he determined, for one night, to refrain from the short and dangerous indulgence he had snatched by travelling from Wolverton to the Hall in the middle of the night; and, though Monimia expected him, to forbear seeing her till the next evening, when he hoped to have arranged in his mind what it was the most necessary to say, to make her submit with composure to their separation. Then too he hoped to know something certain of this commission, of which the General hourly expected intelligence from London; and that he should not, by speaking with uncertainty, add suspense to the other uneasy sensations he must inflict on Monimia. He flattered himself also, that he should hear of the General's having fixed the day of his departure. He had now been a fortnight at West Wolverton; and though his stay seemed, the more it was prolonged, to yield to the rest of the family increased satisfaction, Orlando, whom it detained from the Hall, began to think it the most tedious and unconscionable visit that ever one friend paid to another; and, far from suspecting the real motive, thought with astonishment on General Tracy's living so long among people so unlike his usual associates, and so much out of his way.

CHAPTER XVII.

To reconcile Monimia to his departure, to hide from her the anguish of his own heart at the knowledge that he must go, were no light tasks to Orlando: they were such as all his courage, all his sense of propriety, were nearly unequal to. What would become of her when he was gone? From his earliest remembrance, the certainty of seeing Monimia at the Hall had constituted his principal happiness: yet *he* had many other amusements abroad: he had many relations whom he loved, and who tenderly loved him; he had several pursuits to engage his mind, and several amusements to occupy his time.—Monimia! alas! what had Monimia? Almost alone in the world, *she* had no connection but her aunt, whose reluctant kindness and cold friendship answered but ill to the affectionate temper of the lovely girl, who would have been attached to her, all repulsive as her manners were, from gratitude, and because she believed her the only relation, if Mrs. Lennard had given her leave.—But, selfish, narrow-minded and over-bearing; it was impossible for Monimia to love her; and she once remarked, when she stole for five minutes (while her aunt attended Mrs. Rayland to a morning visit) into the garden with Orlando, that she resembled a passion-flower, that having once been supported by a sort of espalier, the wood had decayed, and, nothing being put in its place, the plant crept along the ground, withering, from the dampness to which it was exposed. See, cried Monimia, this plant resembles me! It seems abandoned to its fate. Orlando remembered what he then said to drive from her mind such gloomy ideas; but now they were about to be ve-

rified. If Monimia was to him all that hitherto sweetened his existence, he was at least as necessary to hers; and a thousand painful fears assailed his heart, as to what she must feel at parting, and what would be her fate when he was gone.

No overture on the affair of his accepting a commission had yet been made to Mrs. Rayland. Mr. Somerive wished Orlando to manage it himself. —Orlando, conscious that much depended upon it, and unwilling to take any decisive step, however necessary, as long as he could avoid it, had still put it off from hour to hour; saying, what was indeed true, that he was now so seldom at the Hall at hours when it was proper to speak of business, that he had found no opportunity.

The next day, however, but one after the dinner at Stockton's, the family were much surprised by the unexpected return of Philip Somerive, who, arriving late in the evening, told his father and mother that he was come, with their permission, to pass some months at home. Tenderly anxious about him as they all were, and ever flattering themselves that a change of conduct would restore him to them, his family received him with such expressions as evinced that they were ready to kill the fatted calf. Orlando felt even more pleasure than the rest at his return: and the younger, unlike the elder brother in the parable, murmured not that there was joy and feasting when he who had been lost was found. Yet this did not arise altogether from the disinterested generosity of his nature. He would at any time have rejoiced that his brother's appearance gave comfort to the hearts of his father and his mother: he now doubly rejoiced, because the presence of Philip Somerive at home dismissed Orlando, almost as a matter of course, to the Hall. He had at this time inha-

bited the apartment set aside for his brother; his own was occupied by the servant of the General, who was too fine a gentleman to be sent into the attic story. West Wolverton house was not a large one; and Orlando, not so well disguising his impatience as he attempted to do, said to his mother as soon as tea was over, that he knew his stay that night must be attended with some inconveniences and removals, and therefore he would, with her permission and his father's, go back to the Hall. Mrs. Somerive immediately assented, and said, And you had better, if your father pleases, set out directly, Orlando, or you will not have your bed aired; and I am sure that little tapestry room where you sleep, as it is on the ground floor, and has windows only to the north, and those windows only long old-fashioned casements, must be horribly damp.

If you will have the goodness then to say to my father that I am gone, and why gone so early, said Orlando, it will be better than my disturbing the company with the ceremony of—Good night!

To this Mrs. Somerive assenting, Orlando left the room to get his horse; but as he passed through the hall, he met his sister Selina. Good night, sweet girl! said he, kissing her hand as he passed her.

Whither are you going, then, Orlando? inquired she.

To the Hall—You know there is no convenient room for me now; and since Philip is come back, I am less wanted.

At this moment Mr. Somerive passed through the hall, and catching some of these words, he put the same question to Orlando; who answered, that his mother had agreed to his going to the Hall,

to make room for his brother: and promised, Sir, to name it to you, added he.

Mr. Somerive paused a moment—To the Hall, said he, Orlando! You are in great haste, I see. Surely you might have staid to supper, as you have not seen your brother so long.

Orlando then gave his mother's reason for his going earlier. That, said his father gravely, is a very good reason for your mother; and *you*, I have no doubt, have some of still greater weight: —but remember, Orlando, continued he more sternly, remember I will not be *trifled* with. Go —I wish you a good night, and as much repose as your *conscience* will let you taste when you render your father unhappy!

Mr. Somerive then passed on; and Selina, who had hardly ever in her life heard him speak as if half angry to her brother Orlando, remained amazed and trembling, clinging to his arm. Good God! cried she, as soon as her father had shut the parlour door, what is all this, my dear brother? what does my father mean?

Can you, Selina, said Orlando in a low and mournful voice—can you be very faithful, very guarded on a point where my life depends on secrecy? Can you, Selina, be secret as the grave, if I trust you?

Can you doubt it? answered the still more alarmed Selina.—Well then, to-morrow, perhaps—for to-morrow I must be here again—to-morrow, Selina, if I obtain permission from another person yet more interested than I am, I will perhaps tell you. In the mean time adieu, my dear sister!—If you hear Philip mention me at supper to my father, try to remember what he says.

Orlando then hastened away, fearful of being detained; and as the weather was serene, he deter-

mined to go on foot, that, if he found all quiet round the apartment of Monimia, he might glide up for a moment to apprize her that they might without interruption meet in his study that evening. There was a late moon, and the night promised to be beautifully clear; he knew therefore that there was little or no hazard of brandy and tea-merchants being abroad: and as to the hint dropt by Stockton, which had at first given him so much pain, he now fancied it was merely the random folly of a drunkard, and that he knew nothing of Monimia but what he might have collected from Philip Somerive after their first unlucky meeting in the woods.

Had he now taken his horse, he must of necessity have made his return known to the stable-servants at the Hall, before he could have a moment's conversation with Monimia: he proceeded therefore quickly on foot, meditating as he went on what had just past with his father and his sister.

He had often thought of entrusting Selina with the secret of his passion for Monimia. He had often wished they were known to each other. Equally innocent, amiable, and gentle, with a perfect resemblance in temper and in years, he believed that they would fondly love each other; and that if he could see them attached, it would be the happiest circumstance of his life. He hoped too, that the society and the soothing sweetness of Selina would be a resource of comfort to his Monimia when he was far from her. But how he could bring them together, he had yet no idea—Selina being never admitted but on days of ceremony at Rayland Hall; and Monimia being so nearly a prisoner, that the unlucky excursion which occasioned them all so much trouble, was almost the first, and was, in consequence of her stay, which had given so much offence, likely to be the last her aunt would allow her to make.

He proposed, however, to consult Monimia upon it, and consider whether some safe means of their meeting could be found.

Between that gate of the park that lay towards West Wolverton, and the house, there were two paths. The upper one was over an eminence where the park paling enclosed part of the down, under which it spread a verdant bosom, with coppices and tall woods interspersed. The other path, which in winter or in wet seasons was inconvenient, wound down a declivity, where the furze and fern were shaded by a few old hawthorns and self-sown firs: out of the hill several streams were filtered, which uniting at its foot, formed a large and clear pond of near twenty acres, fed by several imperceptible currents from other eminences which sheltered that side of the park; and the bason between the hills and the higher parts of it being thus filled, the water found its way over a stony boundary, where it was passable by a foot bridge unless in time of floods; and from thence fell into a lower part of the ground, where it formed a considerable river; and, winding among willows and poplars for near a mile, again spread into a still larger lake, on the edge of which was a mill, and opposite, without the park paling, wild-heaths, where the ground was sandy, broken, and irregular, still however marked by plantations made on it by the Rayland family. It was along the lower road, which went through woods to the edge of what was called the upper pond, that Orlando took his way. Just as he arrived at the water, from the deep gloom of the tall firs through which he passed, the moon appeared behind the opposite coppices, and threw her long line of trembling radiance on the water. It was a cold but clear evening, and, though early in November, the trees were not yet entirely

stripped of their discoloured leaves: a low wind sounded hollow through the firs and stone-pines over his head, and then faintly sighed among the reeds that crowded into the water: no other sound was heard, but, at distant intervals, the cry of the wild fowl concealed among them, or the dull murmur of the current, which was now low. Orlando had hardly ever felt himself so impressed with those feelings which inspire poetic effusions: Nature appeared to pause, and to ask the turbulent and troubled heart of man, whether his silly pursuits were worth the toil he undertook for them? Peace and tranquillity seemed here to have retired to a transient abode; and Orlando, as slowly he traversed the narrow path over ground made hollow by the roots of these old trees, stepped as lightly as if he feared to disturb them. Insensibly he began to compare this scene, the scenes he every day saw of rural beauty and rural content, with those into which his destiny was about to lead him. Oh, Monimia! sighed he, why cannot I remain with thee in this my native country? How happy should I be to be allowed to cultivate one of the smallest of those farms which belong to the Rayland estate, and, comprising in thy society and that of my family all my felicity, have no wish but to live and die without reading that great book which they call the World! Alas! shall I ever understand its language? shall I ever become an adept in the principles it teaches? and shall I be happier if I do? But they tell me that a young man should not be idle! that he must be something, a lawyer or a soldier! and yet, to assist men in ruining each other, and spoiling the simple dignity of justice, seems the business of the first; and to learn the art of destroying honourably our fellow-men, the whole concern of the second. There are, however,

other professions, it is true—I might be a clergyman, and remain here with little to do but to ride twenty or thirty miles of a Sunday, to execute, with the hurry of a postman, the duties I should have sworn to fulfil: and can I conscientiously do what I see done every day? Impossible! I might too be a merchant: but that I have no talents for a profession, honourable as I allow it to be, where the mind is continually chained to the calculation of profit and loss; and if I am to enter into active life, let it be rather in any line than that which shall confine my activity to a counting-house—For then, Monimia! I must equally leave thee, and live among those who value nothing but money, and who would ridicule a passion like mine. He paused, and again looked around him. How beautiful a scene! continued he; I would that Monimia were here to enjoy it! But never am I allowed to point out to her these lovely prospects, never permitted to cultivate that pure and elegant taste which she has received from nature; and I am now about to tell her that we are to part never perhaps to meet more! Yet the die is cast: I have promised —nay, I ought to obey my father—and I go——A deep and mournful reverie succeeded, as, walking onward, his rapid imagination described to him all the sad possibilities that might arise between him and his happiness. In this desponding temper, but without meeting any one to interrupt him in his intended visit to Monimia, he reached the turret, and softly and silently ascended the staircase. He took the usual precautions to ascertain that Monimia was alone; and then, being admitted for a moment to speak to her, he assured her that she might, without any danger, venture to his room that evening. He told her he had much to say to her—much, on which their future happiness de-

pended, to offer to her consideration; and therefore he besought her to divest herself of her fears, and to oblige him. Monimia, confiding entirely in him, promised to be ready; and Orlando, then going through the servants' hall, as if he had that moment arrived from West Wolverton, desired Betty to make up his fire and prepare his bed, saying, that he was come back to his own apartments, on the arrival of his brother at home. He then inquired of Pattenson, if he thought Mrs. Rayland could be spoken to that evening? I know nothing of the matter, answered the old butler in a very sullen tone; you may ask the women folks, as you're always a-dangling after them. When I saw Madam last, she was not in a way very like to be troubled with company to-night.

Orlando, angry and disgusted by this rudeness, now inquired of the cook, who, though she rivalled in person and features the dame Leonarda of Gil Blas, was a great admirer of beauty in others, and had always beheld Orlando with partial eyes. Is Mrs. Rayland ill, then, Martha? said he. Not that I knows on, replied the woman—Only a few twinges of the gout about her feet, much as ordinary, that makes her, I reckon, a little peevish: and I understood that Madam was a little out of sorts at hearing nothing of you yesterday; and they've been a-telling her as how you dined out with them there gentlefolks at the Castle, as Madam hates worse than any varmint.

So, thought Orlando, I am at length become of consequence enough to be missed if I am longer absent than usual! but the officious malice of whoever it was that related our dinner party yesterday, has probably spoiled my reception. Can you tell me, Martha, whether your lady is likely to see me to-night, if I send up for leave?

Lord! I'll answer for't, answered the cook; ifackins, I believe Madam, if she was fairly left to herself, is always as glad to see you as can be— I'll go up now, if you please, and let her know you be here.

This courteous offer Orlando readily accepted; and in a few moments Martha returned. Well, Martha, may I go up? inquired he. Yes, you may, replied Martha; but Madam's not in one of her sugar-plum humours, I can tell you.—She've got the gout in her foot, and she've got some vagaries in her head about your going to visit her innimies: you'll have a few sour looks, I doubt—but, Lord! Master Orlando, you've such a good-looking pleasant countenance, that I'll defy the witch of Endor to be anger'd long with you.

Then, thanking his ambassadress for the trouble she had taken, and being somewhat encouraged by her opinion of the powers of his countenance, he walked up stairs.

He tapped at the door, as was his custom; and was, by the shrill sharp voice of Mrs. Lennard, directed to come in. He was struck, on entering the room, by the sight of Monimia, who stood near the fire watching the moment when a saucepan, in which some medicine Mrs. Rayland was causing to be made, should be ready to remove. Without, however, noticing her, he approached his venerable cousin, in whose countenance, which seemed to have gained no additional sweetness, he did not read a very favourable answer to his inquiry of— how she found herself?

No matter how, replied she with abrupt asperity; if it had been of any consequence to you, you would have asked yesterday, I suppose.

I was detained all day by my father, Madam; and I do most truly assure you (and never was any

declaration more sincere than this of Orlando,) that I was very unhappy at being detained all day from the Hall.

Humph! cried Mrs. Rayland, your new friends no doubt made you amends. I thought, Sir, you had known that when people go *there*, I never desire to see them *here*, not I. I wish, if you like such acquaintance, you had taken the hint. But perhaps you thought that you might take to your brother's courses, and no harm done. For my part, I shall wash my hands of any concern about it, let what will be the end on't.

Orlando now began with calmness, yet without any thing like sycophant submission, to account for his father's having been led by the entreaties of General Tracy, to whom he thought himself much obliged, to break through a resolution he had taken never to visit at Carloraine Castle:—a resolution, added Orlando, that he now heartily wishes he had adhered to, as he found the society such as he neither approves for me, nor can endure for himself. I assure you, Madam, he never intends to repeat an experiment, which nothing but his wishes to oblige the General made him consent to now.

Well, said Mrs. Rayland, a little appeased, it is very wonderful to me that General Tracy, a man of family, can associate with these low-bred upstarts—people who always will give one the notion of having got into the coaches they were designed to drive—But so goes this world! Money does every thing—money destroys all distinctions!—Your Creoles and your East-India people over-run every body—Money, money does every thing.

There is one thing, however, Madam, answered Orlando, that it does not seem to have done—It does not appear to me to have given to this Mr. Stockton, either the mind or the manners of a gentleman.

Indeed, child! cried the old lady: Well, I am glad that you learn to distinguish—Poor wretch! I've heard that his father walked up out of Yorkshire without shoes, and was taken by some rich packer to clean his warehouse, and go on errands. Well, so it is in trade!—So you think him vulgar and ill-bred?—But I suppose you had a very profuse entertainment: can you remember the dishes?

Orlando could with difficulty help smiling at the pains Mrs. Rayland took to feed her disquiet, by obtaining minute particulars of the man whose ostentatious display of wealth so continually offended her. He assured her, however, that he was, in regard to the variety of ornaments of a table, so little of an adept, that, though he knew there was both turtle and venison, he could not tell the name of any other dish. But I believe, Madam, said he, there was almost every thing that at this time of the year comes to table, dressed every way that could be imagined.

Kickshaws, and French frippery, spoiling wholesome dishes. If I had my health, cried Mrs. Rayland, as if animated anew with a truly British spirit —if I had my health, I would ask the favour of General Tracy to dine at Rayland Hall. Indeed I would request his company to the tenants' feast at my own table, and shew him, if he is too young a man to remember it, what an old English table was, when we were too wise to run after foreign gewgaws, and were content with the best of every thing dressed in the English fashion by English people.

Orlando had a thousand reasons to promote a plan as unexpected as it was desirable. Besides the hope he had that the conversation of the General might reconcile Mrs. Rayland to a plan for his independence, and engage her to contribute to its

being advantageously carried into execution, he was amused with the idea of seeing together two such originals as Mrs. Rayland and General Tracy; and he knew, that as the latter was a *man of family*, and so very polite, he should not risk their mutually disliking each other by bringing them together; or at least that, if such a circumstance should happen, those manners, which both piqued themselves on possessing, would prevent their shewing it.— For these, and for many other reasons, he eagerly seized on the hint Mrs. Rayland had dropped. Dear Madam, cried he, I heartily hope you *will* be well enough. The General would be greatly flattered by such a distinction! I know that nothing would oblige him so much. When is the tenants' feast to be? I wish, if it is fixed, you would permit me to be your messenger to-morrow, and to carry him an invitation.

Truly, child, replied Mrs. Rayland, whose anger seemed to be quite evaporated, I am so out of the use of having company, that I don't know well what to say to it. I find my people have fixed the tenants' feast for Thursday next, that is, this day week; and if I were sure of being quite well—— Lennard, what do you think of the matter?

Lennard, who loved nothing better than great dinners, in which she was of so much consequence, answered, Why, indeed, Ma'am, I think you'll be quite well enough—nay, I could venture to say so positively. Your foot is getting better apace; and in other respects, when you have been free from pain for a while, I have not known you better these many years.

Well, Orlando, then, resumed the old lady, we'll consider of it, and let you know to-morrow.—You have taken to your bed below again, I find?

I have, Madam, with your permission.

Well, then, you may come and breakfast with me; and, for to-night, order what you please for your supper in your own room.

Orlando, rejoiced to be thus reconciled, now wished her a good-night, and retired; casting, as he went, a melancholy glance towards Monimia, who, quite unnoticed by either of the ladies, had stood the whole time with her eyes fixed on the fire, and her beautiful arms exposed to its scorching heat, while she was employed in watching the important preparation that was boiling. But Monimia herself, far from feeling her situation, would have undergone infinitely more inconvenience, for as many hours as she now had done minutes, to have enjoyed the satisfaction of hearing Orlando's voice, even when his words were not addressed to her, and of observing the favour he was in with Mrs. Rayland; whose anger, however she seemed desirous of cherishing it, was put to flight on the first apology of her young favourite.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The meeting of the evening promised to be undisturbed. It was long since Orlando had seen his Monimia quietly seated by the fire in the study; and now that he was once more to enjoy that happiness, he could not determine to embitter it by speaking of the probability there was that he was soon to leave her, and enter on a new mode of life. He could, when they were actually together, the less resolve to speak of this, as Monimia appeared in unusual spirits; and from what she had observed of Mrs. Rayland's behaviour to him, in the interview at which she had been present, she found

reason for forming more sanguine hopes than she had ever yet indulged, that their delicious visions were not chimerical; and that Orlando, if not master of Rayland Hall, would yet be amply provided for by the favour of its present possessor.

Instead, therefore, of destroying these flattering visions, which lent to the lovely features of Monimia the most cheerful animation, he endeavoured to divest his own mind of the painful reflections it had of late entertained; and instead of talking of what *was* to happen, he wished to fortify the mind of Monimia against whatever *might* happen, by giving her a taste for reading, and cultivating her excellent understanding. The books he had given her, the extracts she had made from them, and her remarks, afforded them conversation, and gave to Orlando exquisite delight. He had animated the lovely statue, and, like another Prometheus, seemed to have drawn his fire from heaven. The ignorance and the prejudices in which Monimia had been brought up, now gave way to such instruction as she derived from Addison and other celebrated moralists. She understood, and had peculiar pleasure in reading the poets, which Orlando had selected for her; and when she repeated, in a fascinating voice, some of the passages she particularly admired, Orlando was inspired with the most ardent wish to become a poet himself.

Very different was the way in which his elder brother passed this evening. Tormented with fear and remorse, that unfortunate young man had returned to his long-deserted home, for no other reason than because he had, during his northern expedition, lost to his companions every guinea that he could by any means raise, and had besides contracted with them a very considerable debt of honour.[*] He knew not how to apply to his father,

whom he had already impoverished; yet his pride would not let him return to Mr. Stockton's, whither some of the party were again gone, till he had the means of satisfying their demands against him. In this emergency he came home, in hopes of finding some pretence to procure the money of his mother, whom he believed he could persuade to borrow it for him of her brother Mr. Woodford, as she had done a less considerable sum once before; or at all events to gain a few days, in which he might consider what to do.

It was to the dejection he felt on the awkward circumstances to which he had reduced himself, that the gravity and steadiness of manner was owing, which his father took for contrition and reformation. It lasted, however, no longer than till the next evening, when, after tea, Mrs. Somerive as usual, in order to amuse the General, proposed cards—Mr. Somerive, however, having a person with him upon business from whom he could not disengage himself, and Orlando having returned to Rayland Hall immediately after dinner, there was not enough to make a whist table (as none of the young ladies played,) and therefore young Somerive proposed to the General to sit down to piquet.

To this proposal he of course consented, and, either from chance or design, the General lost every party, and had presently paid to his antagonist twelve guineas. Animated by this success, especially as it was against a man who was known to be in habits of playing at the first clubs, Philip Somerive again proposed playing after supper. Fortune continued to be propitious; and when his father, mother, and sisters retired, at a later hour than ordinary, he still continued at the table, where he was now a winner of about fifty guineas.

They were no sooner out of his way, than the

true spirit of gaming, which their presence had checked, broke out.

This is poor piddling work, General! exclaimed he: Do you not think hazard a better thing?

The General answered coolly, that it certainly was; but, added he, I suppose my good host would think his house polluted by having the necessary instruments in it. He has no other dice, I dare swear, than those in the back-gammon table.

Oh! as to that, answered young Somerive, I am always provided with an apparatus in case of emergency—there is no travelling without such a resource—I have the pretty creatures up stairs. What say you, General—shall we waste an hour with them?

With all my heart, replied Tracy. Let us see if you are as much befriended by chance as you have been by skill.

Young Somerive now produced from his traveling portmanteau a box and dice: he put a green cloth over the table, that the rattling of them might not be heard in the house; and then telling the servants that none need sit up but the General's servant, they began to play, and continued at it till morning broke, with various success—But on quitting it, Somerive found himself a very considerable gainer, and retired to his bed flushed with the hope that the General, all veteran as he appeared, and calmly as he played, was a pigeon, from whose wings he might pluck the feathers which were wanting to repair his own.

The General, who only wanted a study of his character, and to whom hundreds were as nothing when he had any favourite project in view, was now perfectly assured that, by losing money to him, or by supplying him with it when he lost it

to others, this young man would become wholly subservient to his wishes, however contrary to honour or conscience. He did not dislike play, though he never regularly pursued it; and had one of those cool heads in such matters, which had prevented his ever suffering by it. He had generally been a winner, and particularly in betting:—he frequented, when he was in London, all the houses where high play is carried on; and was so much accustomed to see thousands paid and received at these places as matters of course, that he held the trifle he had paid to Philip Somerive the evening before as not worth remembering. It was therefore with some surprise that he heard Mr. Somerive, who had called him apart the next morning, express in very forcible terms, his great concern that his son had won so large a sum of him. If the General felt any concern, it was that Philip should have been unguarded enough to speak of it. He soon, however, learned that Mr. Somerive alluded solely to the fifty guineas he had won at piquet, and that of subsequent transactions of the evening he knew nothing. This therefore he carefully concealed, and, assuring Mr. Somerive that he had almost forgot they played at all, conjured him not to be uneasy about it.

I know, my dear General, said Somerive, I know perfectly well that this is a mere trifle to you; but to my son it may, nay it will have the worst consequence. He is, I see with an aching heart, too much devoted to play—Success only nourishes this ruinous passion—And distressed as I have been, and indeed am, by his conduct, I should rather have paid an hundred pounds for him than have seen him win fifty.

The General endeavoured to quiet, on this head, the apprehensions of the unhappy father, by telling

him that he saw nothing in the young man that was not at his age, and with his prospects, very excusable. It is surely, said he, hazardous, my good friend, to check your son too much. If home is rendered utterly unpleasant to him, his volatility seeks resource abroad; and there you know how many designing people beset a young man of his expectations.

Good God! exclaimed Somerive, *what are* his expectations? He has impressed you, I see, my dear Sir, with the same idea which has in fact undone him, and will undo us all. What expectations has he that can in the least be relied upon, unless it be of this small estate, which he is already dismembering, and which will soon disappear—ah! very soon indeed, in the hands of a gamester?

Tie it up, then, said the General.

I cannot, answered Somerive; for it is entailed, and, except my wife's jointure of an hundred a year, which with difficulty I contrived to settle upon her, he may dissipate it all, and I have no doubt but he will.

You judge, I think, too hardly of him. Something is surely to be forgiven him, who has always been told, that he must be heir to the great property of the Raylands, and possess one of the largest landed estates in the county.

O! would to Heaven he never had been told so! said Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh. If ever, my dear General, he should talk to you about it, pray endeavour to wean him from expectations so ruinous, and, I think, so fallacious. It is true that I am heir at law to all the estates of Sir Orlando Rayland my grandfather, in default of Sir Hildebrand's daughters having issue, but not if the survivor of them disposes of it by will, for the whole is hers without any restriction; and there

is not the least chance of her dying *without* a will, for I know she is *never* without one: and the people who surround her take especial care that her own family shall be excluded from it.

You do not then suppose, said the General, you do not believe it possible that these people, by whom I conclude you mean those old servants of whom I have heard you speak, have interest enough with her to secure to themselves so large a property as Mrs. Rayland possesses? I should think it more likely that though she will probably give them considerable legacies, she will leave the estate to the next heir; her pride will urge her to this, perhaps, on the condition of his taking the name of Rayland.

I fear not, answered Mr. Somerive. She has a very singular temper, and has always been taught that the sister of *her* father Sir Hildebrand disgraced herself by marrying my father. She has on a thousand occasions given me to understand, that the small portion of the Rayland blood which I have the honour to boast, is much debased by having mingled with that of a plebeian; and that the blood of my children being still a degree farther removed from the Raylands, she cannot consider them as belonging to the family, which is in her opinion extinct—She means therefore to perpetuate its remembrance by the only method in which she believes she can do it worthily; and, after giving her servants considerable legacies ——perhaps something to Orlando—to have recourse to the common refuge of posthumous pride, and, with her large landed estates, to endow an hospital, which shall be called after her name.

The General exclaimed loudly against such a method of settling her property; but, after hearing on what Mr. Somerive founded his opinion, he

agreed that it seemed but too probable. And yet, added he, it appears to be more the interest of these servants, by whom you say she is governed, that the estate should descend to an individual—particularly that of the old housekeeper, who, from what I can make out of the scraps I have picked up here and there about this Monimia, seems to have a plan of drawing in your youngest son to marry her; and of course it must be her wish that *he* should be Mrs. Rayland's heir.

I have not discovered, replied Somerive, in all I have collected from Orlando, that the aunt is at all privy to their attachment. But that indeed may be her art—She possesses more than almost any woman I ever knew; and had she much less, she must know that the bare suspicion of such an intrigue, on the part of Mrs. Rayland, would occasion the disgrace of Orlando—the expulsion of the girl from the house—and perhaps the ruin of herself, if the least idea occurred of her being of their counsel.

Upon the whole, then, my friend, cried the General, I think that the putting Orlando into some profession immediately seems the only prudent measure you can take. This will probably ascertain Mrs. Rayland's intentions, if they are in his favour; and, if they are not, will remove him from a situation which appears in my mind a thousand times more likely to ruin him for life, than even those imprudences of which you complain in his brother: for be assured, my dear Sir, a young fellow is never so completely ruined as when he has married foolishly—Every other folly is retrievable; but an engagement of that sort blasts a man's fortune for ever: and the wisest thing he can do afterwards is to hang himself.

Though Mr. Somerive, who was not a man of

the world, and who had experienced many years of happiness with a woman whom he married for love, was by no means of Tracy's opinion as to marriages of affection in general, he saw the variety of evils such a marriage would bring on Orlando, in as strong a light as his friend could represent them. He therefore entirely acquiesced in the necessity of his being removed from Rayland Hall; and waited with impatience for Orlando's account of what had passed in that conference which he had undertaken to hold with the old lady, on the subject of his entering the army.

Just as he parted from General Tracy, who about an hour and a half before dinner retired to his toilet, Orlando appeared on horseback. His father met him ; and bidding him join him in the garden as soon as he had put his horse in the stable, he walked thither—Orlando in a moment attended him. Well, said Mr. Somerive gravely, have you had an opportunity of conversing with Mrs. Rayland on this matter ? I have it every hour more at heart, and am determined that you shall be removed from your present situation, unless, what is not to be expected, she signifies her positive resolution to make you very ample amends for your loss of time, and gives me assurances of it.

Orlando, in this peremptory determination of his father, fancied he saw the machinations of his brother to get him away from the Hall; but, without expressing any part of the pain such a suspicion gave him, he answered, You know, my dear Sir, that in our last conference on this subject, I assured you of what I now desire to repeat, that I live only to obey you; but I have had no opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Rayland on this subject ; for when I saw her on the first evening of my return to the Hall, it was with great difficulty I could ap-

pease the anger she felt at our having dined with Stockton.

She knew it then?

Oh, yes!——Lennard and Pattenson take care she shall know every thing. At length, however, I had the good fortune, not only to obtain a remission of my offence, but to engage her to invite our family and the General to dine at her table on Thursday, when the tenants' feast is to be held at the Hall. Mrs. Rayland piques herself on shewing the General, whom she respects as a man of family, a specimen of old English hospitality, in opposition to the modern profusion of the Castle—and her desire to obtain his suffrage in favour of the ancient mode of living at Rayland Hall, has performed what no other consideration would have effected. This unexpected project entered her head the moment I had described our visit; and all yesterday was passed in considering about it, and debating with Lennard whether she should be well enough. To-day it is decided that she shall, and I am sent with the invitation, which certainly you and my mother and sisters will accept; and I suppose General Tracy will oblige us by going also.

Of that there can be no doubt, replied Mr. Somerive.

I thought, therefore, added Orlando, that you and the General might have an opportunity, during the course of the day, of introducing the conversation relative to my entering the army; and that it would be perhaps better than my abruptly disclosing what may, in some of her humours, appear to Mrs. Rayland as a desire on my part to quit her.

You have certainly given my ancient cousin love powder, Orlando, said Mr. Somerive, smiling; for I never heard that, even in her younger days, she shewed for any body as much affection as she lately has done to you.

And yet, replied Orlando, I am almost certain that it goes no farther than a little present kindness, or perhaps a small legacy.

Mr. Somerive, feeling that this was too probable, and was indeed what he had just before been repeating to General Tracy, sighed deeply—and bidding Orlando go with his message of invitation to his mother and sisters, he sent up the card to the General; and then went on his usual circuit round his farm, desiring Orlando to stay dinner.

CHAPTER XIX.

Orlando returned to Rayland Hall in the evening, carrying with him the most polite answer from General Tracy; and, from his own family, assurances of the grateful pleasure with which they accepted Mrs. Rayland's invitation for the following Thursday. Poor Monimia too, though she was to have no other part in this festivity than to assist her aunt in preparing for it, heard with satisfaction from Orlando that it was fixed, because she believed that this unusual civility towards his family and their guest was an indubitable mark of Mrs. Rayland's increasing affection for him.

Orlando, however, who from his father's last conversation, and from his persuasion that Mrs. Rayland would not oppose it, saw that his departure was certain, and would soon happen, thought it cruel to encourage the flattering impressions which the soft heart of Monimia so readily received, and which he had himself taught her to cherish when they were apparently much less likely to be realised. He therefore, when they met this evening, renewed, what he had sometimes distantly touched upon be-

fore, the probability that he must soon enter the army, and quit, at least for a time, the spot which, while she remained on it, contained all that gave value to his life. The tender, timid Monimia, in whose idea every kind of danger was attendant on the name of soldier, was thunderstruck with this intelligence; and it was not till Orlando had tried every argument to sooth and console her, that she was able to shed tears. Could we hope, my Monimia, said he, when he found her composed enough to listen to him—could we hope to continue as we are, and to converse thus undiscovered for years to come, tell me if there is not too much bitter mingled with the few transient moments of happiness, to make us reasonably *wish* to continue it? When we meet, is it not always in fear and apprehension? and are we not ever liable to the same alarm as that from which you suffered so cruelly three weeks since?—Alas! even now we are in the power of an unprincipled ruffian, who, though he appeared willing to engage for mutual secrecy, may, in a fit of drunkenness, betray us; or, through mere insolence, tell—because he has the power of telling. He did not see you; but he knows, and indeed so does Pattenson, that somebody was with me; and the very jealousy that misleads the old rogue Pattenson, will perhaps make him watch and discover us. I need not, Monimia, describe all I should suffer for you if that were to happen; nothing would remain for us but to fly together: and surely I need not add, that if I did not fear to expose you, my angel, to the miseries of poverty, I would, without hazarding a discovery, fly to-morrow; but I am, you know, under age, and we could not marry in England. If I was thus to disoblige my father, he would abandon me for ever, and from Mrs. Rayland I could expect nothing. Such is the

melancholy train of thought I have been compelled to admit in reflecting on our present situation. Perhaps the line of life that is proposed for me is the only one that we can with hope look forward to for the future.—He paused a moment: Monimia stifled the sobs that convulsed her bosom; she could not speak, but sat with her handkerchief to her eyes, and her head resting on her hand, while he proceeded—It is certain that I must tear myself from you; that I must enter on a new scene of life, and perhaps encounter some difficulties and hardships: but would you not despise a man of my age, who would not so purchase independence? If I have a profession, I shall have something on which to depend, if Mrs. Rayland will not, and my father cannot provide for me; something on which, if I have tolerable fortune, I may in a few years be enabled to support my Monimia. Can I, ought I with such hopes to hesitate?

I allow, replied Monimia with a deep sigh—I allow that you ought not.

While General Tracy lives, resumed Orlando, he will be my friend; at least such are his promises to my father. He assures him that he will make a point of my speedy promotion; and his interest is certainly such as leaves no doubt of his having the power to do it.

Ah, Orlando! said Monimia in a low and broken voice, you speak only of the good, and forget or conceal the evil. What if you are maimed, or killed? What then becomes of Monimia, who could not die too, but must live perhaps the most desolate and miserable creature upon earth?

General Tracy, replied Orlando, has assured my father, that the regiment in which he means to procure me a commission, and for which they are now recruiting, is about to be immediately recalled from

America, where the war must very soon terminate in favour of England, and that therefore I shall certainly not be sent abroad: he even says, that as soon as I have my commission, it is highly probable that I shall be ordered into this country on a recruiting party, and may take up my quarters for two or three months in this neighbourhood.

These reasonable arguments, joined to the flattering hope that Orlando might, though he entered on a profession by which he would, she believed, become independent, still remain in England, and even be occasionally in his native county, added to the conviction that they could not long continue to see each other without being discovered, reconciled Monimia to the thoughts of his accepting the commission offered to him by the General; and she became more calm, and able to talk of it with some degree of composure. Orlando, on their parting for that time, besought her to assure him that she would make herself easy, and learn to think of his destination rather as a matter of satisfaction than apprehension. Monimia promised all he desired; but she was no sooner alone than her apprehensions again returned, and the sad possibilities that she had before enumerated recurred in all their terrors to her imagination. To these many were added of which she dared not speak to Orlando: the fears that he might forget her; and that when once entered on new scenes, and among all the beauty, elegance, and accomplishments which she read of in magazines and newspapers, the humble Monimia would be remembered no longer. This seemed to her so probable, and was so distressing to her heart, that she thought she could better endure almost every other evil. Sleep refused to banish these cruel ideas from her mind; and the morning broke, and called her from her

restless bed to her task of attending on her aunt in the housekeeper's room, before she could find any comfort in any of her reflections, unless it was the hope that Mrs. Rayland might oppose the scheme of sending Orlando away, since Monimia persuaded herself that she every day became fonder of his company.

Monimia appeared before her aunt so pale, from want of sleep, and from the acute uneasiness she had undergone, that Mrs. Lennard, notwithstanding her usual insensibility, took notice of it.

Hey-day, girl! cried she, why what's the matter now? Why you look, I protest, as if you had been up all night! Pray what have you been about?

About, aunt! said Monimia, while a faint blush, excited by fear and consciousness, wavered a moment on her cheek—I have been about nothing.

That is what you generally are about, I think, replied Mrs. Lennard harshly. But I suppose you have been sitting up after some nonsense or other—with your books or your writing. I shall put an end to Madam Betty's career, I promise you; I know she lets you have candles, and gets books for you out of the study, though I have time after time forbidden her to do any such thing.

Monimia, willing to let it be thought that Betty did do so, rather than excite any other suspicion by denying it, only said mildly—I hope, dear aunt, there is no harm in my trying to improve myself, if I do not therefore neglect what you order me to do?

Improve yourself!—Yes, truly, a pretty improvement—Your chalky face and padded eyes are mighty improvements: and I'd be glad to know what good your reading does you, but to give you a hankering after what you've no right to expect?

An improved lady will be above helping me, I suppose, very soon.

When I am, my dear aunt, answered Monimia, it will be time enough for you to forbid my reading; but, till then, pray don't be angry if I endeavour to obtain a little common instruction.

Don't be impertinent, exclaimed Mrs. Lennard; don't be insolent—for if you are, Miss, this house is no place for you.—I see already the blessed effects of your reading—you fancy yourself a person of consequence: but I shall take care to put an end to it; for if Betty supplies you with candles, I'll discharge her.

She has not indeed, my dear aunt, said Monimia, whose generous mind could not bear that another should suffer for her.

She has not!—what has she not? inquired Mrs. Lennard.

She has *not* lately supplied me with candles, replied Monimia.

How is it then, cried Mrs. Lennard, fixing on her a stern and inquiring eye, that light is sometimes, aye and very lately too, seen from your window, at hours when your own candle is taken away, and when you ought to be in bed?

To this Monimia could answer nothing, but that it was true she had now and then saved a piece of wax candle herself; but, in order to put an end to an inquiry which had already made her tremble with the most cruel apprehensions, she endeavoured less to account for what *had* happened, and which she could not deny, than to appease her aunt by very earnest assurances that what offended her should happen no more, and that, since she so much disliked her reading of a night, she would never again practise it.

Mrs. Lennard seemed to be somewhat satisfied by

these protestations—though, while Monimia was with many tears repeating them, her fierce eyes were fixed on the countenance of her trembling niece with a look of questioning doubt, which made Monimia shrink with dread—for it seemed to intimate that more was suspected than was expressed.

At length, however, she condescended to appear pacified; and summoning Betty and another of the maid-servants, she gave them their employments, in preparing for the grand dinner: then ordering Monimia to take her share, and the superintendence of the whole, she returned to the parlour; and poor Monimia, glad to be relieved from her presence, proceeded as cheerfully in her task as her melancholy reflections on what had passed with Orlando the preceding night, and her newly-awakened dread of her aunt's suspicions, would allow her to do.

Mr. Somerive was much at a loss to know how to act in regard to his eldest son: fondly flattering himself that this beloved son had seen the dangerous errors of his former conduct, he could not bear the idea of shewing any resentment at what was past, or that, by his being left out of the party going to Rayland Hall, he should be considered as an exile from the favour of Mrs. Rayland; yet, to let him go without an invitation, he knew, would give offence, and he knew not how to set about obtaining one. Orlando, who passed a few moments with him in the course of the preceding Wednesday, saw his father's uneasiness, because he had felt something of the same kind himself about his brother; and he generously, though without making any merit of it, undertook to remove this source of vexation, by engaging Mrs. Rayland to invite him. This was an arduous task, as the old Lady had not seen him for more than two years, and during that

time had heard only evil reports of his conduct. The offence he had given her by associating with the Stockton set, and even joining in those trespasses of which she believed she had so much reason to complain, had embittered her mind against him, even more than his gaieties and extravagance: yet Orlando, by assuring Mrs. Rayland that he was now sensible of his error, that he was come home with a resolution to remain with his family, and that it would discourage him in the career of reformation if she did not seem ready to forgive, and again consider him as a part of it, so flattered her self-consequence, and soothed her resentment, that she agreed to receive Philip as one of her guests, and commissioned Orlando to carry an invitation to his brother: nor could she with all her natural severity of temper, and little sensibility to great or generous actions, help being affected by the noble disinterestedness of her young favourite, who thus laboured to reconcile to her a brother who would have been considered by most young men as a formidable rival in her favour, and have been assiduously kept at the distance to which he had thrown himself. This exalted goodness of heart she put down immediately to the account of the Rayland blood; and in praising Orlando to Mrs. Lennard, to whom she now often spoke of him with pleasure, she remarked, that he every day became more and more like the Rayland family.—What fine eyes the young man has! cried she; and how they flashed fire when he was pleading for that sad brother of his, with so much earnestness! And then when I seemed willing to oblige him, what a fine countenance! I could almost have fancied it was my grandfather's picture walked out of its frame, if it had not been for the difference of dress!

Mrs. Lennard assented, and encouraged every fa-

vourable idea her mistress entertained of Orlando; but all this while a mine was proceeding against him, of which the success would inevitably ruin all his hopes.

This originated in the jealousy of Pattenson, who, whatever favour he obtained by dint of presents and money from his coquettish dulcinea, could never divest himself of his apprehensions that Orlando was a successful rival. This cruel fear had taken possession of his mind long before the discovery of Jonas Wilkins; and notwithstanding the girl's solemn protestations that she was in her own bed at the time she was accused of being with Orlando in his study, and the offers of the woman who lived in the same room to confirm this by her *Bible oath*, Pattenson could never be persuaded but that it was Betty herself; because, having not the slightest suspicion of Monimia, who was, he knew, locked in by her aunt every night, he believed that it was impossible it could be any other person. Betty, in order to tease him, sometimes affected to be conscious that the accusation was true, while she persisted in denying it; and Orlando rather encouraged than repressed a notion that prevented any conjectures which might have glanced towards Monimia.

For three weeks, therefore, this uneasy suspicion had corroded the bosom of the amorous though venerable Mr. Pattenson, who, greatly as he loved his ease, resigned it to the gratification of his revenge; and who determined to detect Betty, and in doing so thought he should have an opportunity of ruining Orlando with his lady, and thus getting out of his way a rival who might one day be his master; and whom he hated, not only on account of his love, but of his interest; for so highly had he been in favour with all the three ladies, that each had in dying, given him a very considerable legacy, and

recommended him to the survivor; and he did not doubt but that, on the decease of his present mistress, he should find his property inferior to that of few gentlemen in the county.

The gradual increase, therefore, of the favour shewn to Orlando did not at all please him; but his attempts to injure him with Mrs. Rayland had never succeeded, and began to be displeasing to her. Still, however, he knew that, if Orlando were detected of an intrigue with one of her women-servants, it was an offence which Mrs. Rayland would never pardon; and though this discovery would certainly occasion the discharge of the fair Helen for whom he sighed, Pattenson was sure that Orlando could not take her into his protection for want of money; while, being dismissed without a character, by the two inexorable vestals, his lady and her companion, the girl would be glad to make terms with him; and he was quite rich enough to undertake to keep her in some of the neighbouring towns, till she might be supplanted by some newer object.

Such were the speculations of the politic Pattenson; but, like many other politicians, he pursued, among the many crooked paths before him, that which led him from his purpose. Instead of watching Orlando, he set himself to watch Betty, who never went in even with a message to him in his study without Pattenson following her; and on the night he engaged her to sit up for him, the butler was concealed in a closet within the servants' hall, and heard all their conversation; and though what then passed tended directly to prove to Pattenson that he was in an error, he persuaded himself that they suspected his concealment, and had agreed upon what they should say to mislead him.

Instead, therefore, of rejoicing to find his suspicions were not confirmed, he was only irritated to

find that his attempts to dètect the supposed lovers were baffled; and he redoubled his vigilance in watching Betty, and engaged one of the footmen in the same office. This was the same man who had seen Orlando cross the park one morning at a very early and unusual hour, and who then taking him at a distance for a poacher, had pursued and stopped him; circumstances which the fellow, who was the mere creature of Pattenson, had afterwards related to him, with conjectures as to the reason of Orlando's appearance that had helped to raise higher those suspicions Pattenson had before entertained.

That Mrs. Rayland had determined to have company at her own table, and particularly the family of Somerive, on the day of the tenants' feast, was a terrible vexation to Pattenson—who, instead of presiding like the master of the house in the hall, would now be only the butler at the side-board in the great dining-room; and to chagrin for the consequence he thus lost, was added the mortification of knowing that while he should be busied in attending on his lady up stairs, Orlando, who on these occasions, which happened twice a year, always mingled with the young farmers, would have all the *ladies* of the hall to himself.

It had been the custom of the house, time immemorial, for the landlord, receiving his Michaelmas rents, to give the most numerously-attended entertainment of the year, and to allow the tenants' sons and daughters, their friends, and the servants of the family, to have a fiddle in the great hall. The Mrs. Raylands, notwithstanding the state in which they had been educated, had been always, during their youth, led to the company by their father, and, accompanied by Lady Rayland, had each gone down one dance with some neighbouring gentleman who

was invited on purpose, or with the chaplain of the family. Those days, though long since past, with almost all the witnesses of their festivity, were still recollected by Mrs. Rayland with some degree of pleasure; and as she adhered most scrupulously to old customs, however unlike her usual mode of life, this sort of rustic ball given to the tenants had always been kept up, except in those two years that were marked by the death of two of the ladies.—Mrs. Lennard and Mr. Pattenson, who had long presided at them, loved the gaiety of the scene, and the consequence they had in it, as they were considered as the master and mistress of the feast; for though Mrs. Rayland once used to go down to honour it with her presence for ten minutes, she had now left off that custom, from age and infirmity; and her servants, to whom it was attended with some trouble and loss of time, had persuaded her that she was always ill after such an exertion. It was, therefore, usual with her to sup on this anniversary somewhat earlier than ordinary, and to go to her bed, dismissing Lennard to her post of mistress of the revel, with a strict charge to her to watch assiduously against the intrusion of drunkenness or impropriety; to see that all the guests withdrew in due season, and quite sober; and to settle every thing after their departure for the decorum and tranquillity of the next day.

Mrs. Lennard had in general adhered to these good rules, though she thought herself at liberty a little to vary from them in the detail. Thus she deemed it no breach of the regularity her lady recommended, if she acceded to the earnest solicitations of a handsome young farmer, who, as she was persuaded, left the buxom damsel his partner, purely for the gratification of going down a dance with her; though it sometimes happened that her interest

in the renewal of a lease, or some building wanting on the farm, for which she could effectually intercede, were more powerful motives than even the honour or the pleasure thus obtained—notwithstanding Mrs. Lennard's assertion, which was probably true, that she had learned to dance of the dancing-master who taught the first Duke of Cumberland and *all* the princesses, and that she was celebrated for her excellence in that accomplishment, particularly her great agility in the rigadoon.

This rigadoon, like all early and pleasing acquirements, was still recollected with gratitude for the fame it had obtained for her; and notwithstanding the lapse of years, and some rheumatic complaints, she could occasionally introduce some of its original graces into her country dance. It is true she never performed above one or two at most; but what she *did*, she piqued herself upon executing with a degree of spirit, which made all the operators in cotillon steps and allemands, 'hide their diminished heels.' But now, alas! a fall she got a few months before, and the cruel and cowardly attack of the rheumatism on the limb while it was in a disabled state, had put an end to the exhibition of this rigadoon step for ever. Yet, with the true spirit of perseverance, Mrs. Lennard, though she danced no more, loved to overlook the dancers, and not having the same reasons as Pattenson had to dislike the party proposed, had with all her interest promoted it—feeling, probably, that the pleasure she resigned in the country-dance with her rigadoon step, would be amply made up to her in appearing no longer as only housekeeper and attendant, but in the capacity of a companion and friend to Mrs. Rayland; for, now her lady was so infirm, she was introduced in that character to whatever company might be in the house. Far as she was advanced in years, to

adorn her person was her foible; and she reflected with some pleasure on the smart and well-fancied dress with which she intended, on this important Thursday, to astonish and outshine the Somerive family. Of this vanity, however, poor Monimia was the victim; for, after many debates about what she should wear, Mrs. Lennard found something to do to every article of her dress. These alterations were entrusted to Monimia; and at night when Orlando sought her, as usual, in the hope that he might pass an hour with her in her own room, he found her not only indulged with candles, which had been so lately prohibited, but weeping over a task which she doubted whether it would be possible for her to finish, in the time assigned her, to her aunt's satisfaction.

Orlando had a particular interest in her appearing to advantage the next day; for, though he knew she would not be allowed, nor did he wish her to be seen among the guests, he had imagined a project to introduce her and his sister Selina to each other while every other person was engaged. The more he reflected on this scheme, the more practicable it appeared, and the more it flattered his imagination. He, therefore, could not bear to think that, between fatigue and fretting, the beauty he had said so much of to Selina should not be seen in all its brilliancy. You shall not, said he, Monimia, go with me to-night, but you shall go to bed; and if those cursed things must be done, you may finish them in the morning.

Ah, no! replied Monimia, wiping away the tears which on so slight an occasion she was ashamed of letting him see—no, Orlando, not so—I must neither pass these next four or five hours with you, or in my bed; but must sit up and finish this: for I am very sure that, with the dawn of the morning,

my aunt, without considering how little time she has allowed me for this business, will summon me to that which must go forward in the housekeeper's room ; and that, to-morrow, I shall have the jellies and syllabubs to make, to give out every thing to the cook, and to help in all the made dishes : perhaps I shall never sit down ten minutes from the time I get up till dinner is sent in : and therefore what I have to do of this sort, must be done to-night.

Curse on the ridiculous, ostentatious old woman ! exclaimed Orlando. I cannot bear to think of your being so fatigued!

Do not, said Monimia, with an angelic smile—do not let us, my dear friend, be rendered uneasy by trifles, when it is but too probable that we shall have so many real sorrows so soon to contend with. What is the loss of a few hours' rest ? and of how many hours have not I voluntarily deprived myself ! Besides, added she, seeing him gaze on her with a look of deep concern, to finish the whole is not so great an effort as I foolishly, from low spirits, owing perhaps to thinking too much on the conversation of last night, at first represented it to myself. However, Orlando, instead of my going down to your room, I must sit here.

And I must not remain with you ? cried he.

A little while you may, replied Monimia ; but speak low—I shall not do my millinery the worse for your sitting by me, if you will but be calm and reasonable.

They then began to consult on the proposed meeting of the next day. Monimia trembled as it was talked of ; yet pleasure was mingled with the apprehension with which she thought of being made acquainted with any of his relations, particularly with his beloved Selina, whom he repre-

sented as a second self. It was settled, after some little debate on the subject, that when every part of the family were engaged in the hall, Monimia should, at an hour fixed upon, find her way in the dark to the study; not through the chapel, but by the usual way through the house; and that Selina should be brought there by her brother immediately afterwards, where they might remain half an hour unsuspected, and with much less hazard than in Monimia's room. This being arranged, Orlando entreated her to spare herself as much as possible; and having extorted a promise from her, that when she found herself fatigued she would endeavour to sleep, he reluctantly left her.



CHAPTER XX.

MONIMIA, secure of the tenderest affection of her lover, bore, without more repining, the little hardships to which her situation exposed her:—but her mind looked forward, in mournful anticipation, to the time when she should no longer hear that soothing voice lending her courage against every transient evil; no longer receive continual assurances of the ardour and generosity of his attachment; and find in his disinterested love, his attentive friendship, sufficient consolation against her uncertain or uneasy destiny.

To obey him, was the first wish of her life; she therefore endeavoured to drive from her mind the melancholy reflections that prevented her repose, and put off the finishing her work till the next day. As soon as it glimmered through her casement, she arose to her task; which having soon

finished, she awaited with a lightened heart the other orders of her aunt.

The whole house was in a bustle—and Mrs. Rayland was not only in unusual health, but as anxious for the splendour and excellence of the entertainment, as if she had a deeper design than merely to outshine the newer elegancies of Carloraine Castle. All the operations of Mrs. Lennard and her attendants succeeded happily. By half after two all the guests were assembled: by half after three all the tables groaned under the weight of venison and beef. About seventy people were assembled in the hall. In the dining parlour the party consisted of General Tracy, who was placed at Mrs. Rayland's right hand; on her left Mrs. Hollybourn, the wife of the archdeacon of that district, a lady of a most precise, and indeed formidable demeanour: opposite to her, and next to Mrs. Somerive, sat the Doctor himself, a dignified clergyman, of profound erudition, very severe morals, and very formal manners; who was the most orthodox of men, never spoke but in sentences equally learned and indisputable, and held almost all the rest of the world in as low estimation as he considered highly his own family, and above all himself.

Between her mother and Mr. Somerive, on the other side, was placed their only daughter and heiress, Miss Anne-Jane-Eliza Hollybourn, who, equally resembling her father and her mother, was the pride and delight of both: possessing something of each of their personal perfections, she was considered by them a model of loveliness; and her mind was adorned with all that money could purchase. The wainscot complexion of her mamma was set off by the yellow eyebrows and hair of the Doctor. His little pug nose divest-

ed of its mulberry hue, which, on the countenance of his daughter, was pronounced to be *le petit nez retroussé*, united with the thin lips drawn up to make a little mouth, which were peculiar to his 'better half,' as he facetiously called his wife. The worthy archdeacon's short legs detracted less from the height of his amiable daughter, as she had the long waist of her mother, fine sugar-loaf shoulders that were pronounced to be *extremely genteel*, and a head which looked as if the back of it had by some accident been flattened, since it formed a perpendicular line with her back. To dignify with mental acquirements this epitome of human loveliness, all that education could do had been lavished; masters for drawing, painting, music, French, and dancing, had been assembled around her as soon as she could speak; she learned Latin from her father at a very early period, and could read any easy sentence in Greek; was learned in astronomy, knew something of the mathematics, and, in relief of these more abstruse studies, read Italian and Spanish. Having never heard any thing but her own praises, she really believed herself a miracle of knowledge and accomplishments; and it must be owned, that an audience less partial than those before whom she generally performed, might have allowed that she performed very long concertos, and solos without end, with infinite correctness, and much execution. Then she made most inveterate likenesses of many of her acquaintance; and painted landscapes, where very green trees were reflected in very blue water. Her French was most grammatically correct, though the accent was somewhat defective; and she knew all manner of history—could tell the dates of the most execrable actions of the most execrable of human beings—and never had occasion to consult,

so happy was her memory, Trusler's Chronology. As it was believed, so it was asserted by the Doctor and his wife, that their daughter was the most accomplished woman of her age and country; and by most of their acquaintance it was taken for granted. The gentlemen, however, whom all these elegancies were probably designed to attract, seemed by no means struck with them; some of them, who had approached her on the suggestion of her being an heiress, had declared that her fortune made no amends for her want of beauty; and others had been alarmed by the acquisitions which went so much beyond those they had made themselves. Thus, at six-and-twenty (though the lady and her parents, for some reasons of their own, called her no more than twenty-two,) Miss Hollybourn was yet unmarried; for, of those lovers who had offered, some had been rejected by the Doctor, and some by herself. She affected a great indifference, and talked of the pleasures of pursuing knowledge in an elegant retirement. But it was observed, that whenever any young men of present fortune, or of future expectation, were in the country, Dr. Hollybourn's family returned the visits of the ladies to whom these gentlemen belonged, with unusual punctuality.

While they were in this part of the world, they always dined once or twice at Rayland Hall, where the Doctor was well received as a most pious worthy man, his Lady as a very good kind of woman, and Miss as a mighty pretty sort of a young person. Of late the whole family had risen into higher favour; for the Doctor was the only clergyman in the country around who had resisted the good entertainment so profusely given at Carloraine Castle, and had refused to visit a man who kept a mistress. He had even gone farther, and preached a sermon

which all his congregation said pointed immediately at Mr. Stockton; but as Mr. Stockton did not hear it, and having heard it would not have cared for it, the reproof only edified his hearers, and raised the Doctor in the esteem of the Lady of the Hall.

The lower part of the table was filled by the four Miss Somerives and their two brothers; Orlando, at the request of Mrs. Rayland, taking his seat at the bottom.

The plenty and excellence of the table, which was furnished almost entirely from the park, farm, warren, gardens, and ponds of Rayland Hall, were highly commended by the guests, and by none with more zeal than the General and the Doctor, who vied with each other in applying that sort of flattery of which their venerable hostess was most susceptible. The General spoke in terms of the highest respect of her ancient family, and of the figure made in history by the name of Rayland. The Doctor, while he did justice to the excellent dishes before him, launched out in very sincere praise of the domain which produced them: the beautiful park which, he averred, fed the very best venison in the country; the woods abounding in game; the extensive ponds, whose living streams contained all manner of fish; the rich meadows below, that fatted such exquisite beef; the fine sheep walks on the downs above, which sent to table mutton that rivalled the Welsh mutton itself! —then, such gardens for fruit! such convenient poultry yards!——Mrs. Rayland, who loved to hear her place praised, could have listened to such eulogiums for ever; and seemed totally to have forgotten that, according to the course of nature, she should be mistress of these good things but a very little time longer, and that, when a little space in the chancel of the adjoining church would be all

she could occupy, they must pass into the possession of another.

Who that other was to be, appeared an inquiry which the Doctor had much at heart. From some late circumstances he had reason to suppose that Orlando would be the fortunate possessor of all the excellent accommodations which impressed him with so much veneration:—but he now saw the elder brother again received, and when he considered the advantages which primogeniture might give him in the mind of Mrs. Rayland, he doubted to which of the Somerives it would be politic to pay court.

Some ideas were floating in his mind, that whichever of these young men became master of Rayland Hall, could not fail to be a very proper match for the most accomplished Miss Hollybourn. It was certain that he had always reckoned upon a title for her; but such a deficiency might easily be made up by the successor to such a fortune. What so easy as to change a name by the King's most gracious licence? and to renew the old title of Baronet, which had been so long in the family?—Sir Philip Rayland! Sir Orlando Rayland! either sounded extremely well. Both were very well looking young men, and the youngest remarkably handsome. The more the Doctor considered this project, the more feasible it appeared; and he now began to study the chances, which he thought he could do from Mrs. Rayland's behaviour.

A very little observation determined him in favour of Orlando. He saw that Mrs. Rayland seemed to look upon him as her son, while towards his brother her manners were cold and stately. When dinner was over, the gentlemen, after a short stay over their wine, followed the ladies to another apartment. General Tracy was, at the desire of

Mrs. Rayland, shewn into the gallery of portraits by Orlando—and the young ladies, at the request of Miss Hollybourn, who had never seen all the pictures in the house, were permitted by their mother to be of the party; while Philip Somerive, who went out under pretence of accompanying them, slipped away as soon as he left the drawing-room, and went after his own imagination.

It was now dark, and these portraits were to be shewn by candle-light to General Tracy, who cared not a straw if the whole race of Raylands had been swept from the memory of mankind; though he had, partly by guess, and partly from recollection, been incessantly talking to Mrs. Rayland about the glory of her ancestors. By this he perceived he had made a very unexpected progress in her favour; which he would by no means forfeit by shewing any indifference to her proposal of visiting the representations of the eminent men in whose praise he had been so eloquent. But a much stronger inducement was his hope to find an opportunity of speaking to Isabella, while he pretended to contemplate with admiration the picture of her great grandfather.

But this hope was rendered abortive by the presence of Miss Hollybourn, who leaning on Isabella's arm, continued to question Orlando as to the history of every portrait, and then made her remarks upon it—sometimes addressing herself to the General, and sometimes to Orlando, who were equally weary of her, and who would both have given the world for her absence; for Orlando dreaded her detaining him beyond the time that he had fixed for the meeting between his sister Selina and Monimia; and the General detested her for being in the way when he fancied he could otherwise, by some means or other, have enjoyed that notice from Isabella which

he found it so very difficult to obtain in the house of Mr. Somerive; where, since he had spoke more plainly to her of his passion, she had not only shunned him, but had assured him that she would repeat his conversation to her father. Twice, therefore, he had been forced to apologize, and turn off his professions as a joke, because he could never find her long enough alone to allow of his using those arguments that he thought must be successful; and he had been eagerly solicitous to accept the invitation from Mrs. Rayland, because he hoped that in such a great house, in a day of universal festivity, such an opportunity would be found.

Miss Hollybourn, having sufficiently shewn her knowledge both in painting and history, and imagining her auditors were amazed and edified by both, requested to know if the house did not furnish many other portraits of remarkable persons, or pictures by eminent hands. Orlando answered coldly, that there were some in other parts of the house, but none particularly worthy her attention. She desired, however, he would have the goodness to shew her round that suit of rooms. It was the side of the house formerly set apart for company, but now was very rarely inhabited. The furniture was rich, but old fashioned:—the beds were of cut velvet or damask, with high testers, some of them with gilt cornices:—the chairs were worked, or of coloured velvets, fringed with silk and gold, and had gilt feet:—fine japanned cabinets, beautiful pieces of china, large glasses, and some valuable pictures, were to be seen in every room, which, though now so rarely inhabited, were kept in great order; and the oak floors were so nicely waxed, that to move upon them was more like skating than walking.

Miss Hollybourn had something to say on every

object she beheld. One bespoke the grandeur, another the taste, a third the antiquity of the family who were owners of the mansion: but still, among all this common-place declamation, it was easy to see that the most amiable moveable in it at present was, in her opinion, the handsome, interesting Orlando.

General Tracy, accustomed to study the fair, perceived this immediately. He perceived too, that Orlando disliked her as much as she seemed charmed with him, and that therefore this rich heiress would not be the means of preventing the plan they had in agitation from taking effect. He therefore ventured to say to him, when he had an opportunity as they descended the great staircase—You are a fortunate man, Sir!

Fortunate, Sir! said Orlando, who had nothing in his head but his intended meeting with Monimia—How do you mean fortunate?

Nay, replied the General, most young men would, I believe, think it fortunate to be so highly approved of by such a young lady!

What lady. Sir! cried Orlando, in increased alarm, and still thinking of Monimia.

Miss Hollybourn, replied the General—the accomplished Miss Hollybourn.

Miss Hollybourn! exclaimed Orlando with a contemptuous look; yet recollecting that he had no right to despise her whether the General's conjecture was just or not, he added, The approbation of *such* a young lady is certainly what I neither desire nor deserve.

This passed as they waited on the staircase, while Miss Hollybourn explained to the two Miss Somerives the Loves of Cupid and Psyche, which were painted on the wall; though the picture was so little illuminated by the two wax candles, carried by

Orlando and a servant, that nothing but her passion to display her universal knowledge, could have induced her to attempt clearing up the obscurity in which the wavering and unequal light involved a story not very clearly told by the painter. At length the dissertation finished; and the whole party returned to the drawing-room, where they found the good Doctor had supported the conversation during their absence. In about half an hour afterwards Mr. Pattenson came in great form to announce that the tenants were assembled in the hall, and requested to know if their lady was well enough to oblige them with her presence during their first dance. This was the established etiquette. Mrs. Rayland answered, that she would be there; and then addressing herself to her company, she said, That it had always been her custom in the time of Sir Hildebrand, her father, to lead down, with her dear deceased sisters, the first dance at the tenants' feast; that the custom had been long since laid aside; but if any of the friends whom I have now the pleasure of seeing assembled, will condescend to go down a dance with the tenantry and domestics——

The General and the Doctor eagerly interrupted her—

I am not a dancing man, Madam, cried the General: I never was fond of dancing. How much I now, in looking at that beautiful group of young ladies, have cause to regret it! and much I shall envy the young men, who no doubt will take advantage of such an opportunity.

I, Madam, cried the Doctor, quitting his seat and waddling to her, am neither by nature or profession a dancing man; but to shew you how much I honour so excellent a custom, there is my substitute (pointing to his daughter), and I will venture to say that few men ever boasted a better.

Mrs. Rayland, then looking round the room, said, Mr. Orlando Somerive, you will have the honour of beginning the dance with Miss Hollybourn.

Orlando, who would have heard of an impending earthquake with as much pleasure, hesitated, and said, My brother, Madam—my brother has a superior claim to that happiness.

No, no, child! cried Mrs. Rayland; not at all—you are, *as it were*, at home here, and therefore I will have you begin. Besides, I don't see your brother:—when he returns, he may take your eldest sister; and the two youngest ladies may dance together, for I suppose you will all choose to dance.

Mrs. Somerive assented for her daughters, and said, Perhaps, Madam, Philip is already below.

However that may be, replied Mrs. Rayland coldly, it is quite time to begin; the people are, no doubt, impatient. Therefore, if you General Tracy, and you Dr. Hollybourn, and you Mr. Somerive, will have the kindness to see the ladies to the hall, my people will help me thither in a few moments.

The man of war, and the man of peace, now declared how happy they should esteem themselves to be permitted the honour of being her attendants; but she told them only Pattenson and Lennard had been used to it, and again desired they would conduct the other ladies. The General, under the cruel necessity of offering his hand to Mrs. Somerive, or Mrs. Hollybourn, cast a wistful look towards Isabella, and took the hand of the latter, on seeing Mrs. Somerive conducted by the Doctor; while Orlando, with a heavy heart, led Miss Hollybourn, and his sisters followed. It was now within a quarter of an hour of the time that he had hoped to meet his Monimia; and he saw himself tied down

to an engagement from which he feared there was little hope of escaping in time. Philip, to whom he most earnestly wished to transfer the little coveted honour designed him by his partner, appeared not; and poor Orlando stood awaiting his arrival at the head of fifteen or sixteen couple who were going to dance, execrating his ill fortune, which seemed to have brought this odious heiress on purpose to disappoint him of the exquisite pleasure with which he had on this night fondly flattered himself—that of forming a lasting and tender friendship between the sister he so fondly loved, and his adored Monimia.

CHAPTER XXI.

At length Mrs. Rayland was seated at the upper end of the hall, near the fire—the General placed himself by her, and the Doctor strutted round her —the other ladies were opposite; and the dance began.

Poor Orlando, whose heart beat not responsive to the music, made, however, an effort to conceal his vexation. His partner, who had learned for many years of the most celebrated master, exerted all her knowledge of the art, and displayed all her graces to attract him; while he, hardly conscious of her existence, proceeded mechanically in the dance; and so little penetration had the spectators, that his absence, or distaste to what he was about, was wholly unperceived, while Mrs. Rayland could not help observing to the Doctor how well Orlando performed—Is he not, said she, a fine young man?

Indeed he is, Madam, replied the Doctor, who had now the opening he so long wished for; a very

fine young man; I think; and he became an inch higher as he spoke. I think indeed that this island produces not a finer couple than *your* kinsman, Madam, and the *daughter* of your humble servant.

Mrs. Rayland, who loved not female beauty, whether real or imaginary, did not so warmly assent to this as the Doctor expected; who, not discouraged, squatted himself down in the place the General had that moment vacated (who could not forbear walking after Isabella down the dance), and thus proceeded:

I assure you, dear Madam, I have often spoken most highly in praise of your sagacity and discernment in electing the young Orlando as your favourite and *protegé*. He is a fine young man—good, prudent and sensible; and, I am sure, grateful for your bounty. I dare say that he will do well; for, under your auspices, there are few men even of consideration and fortune, who, having daughters, would not be proud of an alliance with him.

Mrs. Rayland answered rather coldly, I believe Mr. Orlando has no thoughts of marrying—He is yet too young.

He is young, to be sure, Madam; but, for my own part, I must observe, that early marriages founded, as no doubt his would be, alike on prudence and inclination, generally turn out happily. As to my own girl, undone as I and Mrs. Hollybourn must to be sure feel without her, I declare to you that, though she is so young, I should not hesitate to dispose of her, to a man of even her own age, if I were convinced that he was a prudent, sober young man, unlike those sad examples of folly and extravagance that we see before our eyes every day; a young man who had had a virtuous education, which in my opinion is a private one; a young man of family and of good expectations—I

say, Madam, that on such a one, though his present fortune be unequal to Miss Hollybourn's expectations, I should not hesitate, young as she is, and living as I do, only by gazing on her, to bestow her with twenty thousand pounds down, and—I will say nothing of future expectations—I am, I bless the Father of all mercies, in a prosperous fortune—I have seventeen hundred a year in church preferment; my own property, which I have realised in land, is somewhat above twelve hundred. When I have given my girl her little marriage portion, I have still something handsome in the three per cents. and in India stock a trifle more. My brother-in-law, the bishop, has no children, and my daughter will inherit the greatest part of his fortune. So you see, Madam, that, to say nothing of her personal and mental accomplishments, which to be sure it ill becomes *a father* to insist upon—I say, reckoning only her pecuniary advantages, there are few better matches in England.

The Doctor, who knew that Mrs. Rayland loved money, imagined she could not fail of being attracted by this history of his wealth, nor misunderstand his meaning in giving it: but he had for once mistaken his ground. Mrs. Rayland, though she loved her own money, loved nobody the better for having or affecting to have as much. She knew that, rich as Doctor Hollybourn now was, he began his classical career as a servitor at Oxford; and that his brother-in-law the bishop, from whose *nepotism* his wealth and consequence had been in great measure derived, was the son of an innkeeper. Though she always spoke highly of his piety, and his high-church principles, she had ever contemned his efforts to make himself be considered as a man of family: nor did she feel much disposed to encourage any scheme to make Orlando independent of her by

marriage, still less an attempt to extort from her a decision concerning him; which, whatever her real sentiments might be, she was not of a temper to declare. For all these reasons she heard the conversation of Doctor Hollybourn very coldly, and only said, that to be sure Miss was a very accomplished young lady; and having such a fine fortune, might expect to marry in high life.

Still the Doctor was not repulsed; and fancying that he had not yet spoken plain enough, he went on to enlarge on his notions of happiness, and on his views for his daughter. High life, he said, in the common acceptation of the word, was not his ambition. It was real domestic happiness, and not unnecessary and unmeaning splendour, he desired for his dear girl—a good husband untainted with the vices and false philosophy of a dissolute age—an handsome country residence, where she might be received into an ancient and religious family—were rather his objects. A title, added he, a title has its advantages no doubt, and especially if it be an ancient title, one that brings to the mind the deeds of the glorious defenders of our country—men who have shed their honourable blood in defence of the Church of England, and their King—who bled in the cause for which Laud and his sainted master died. When I hear such names, and see their posterity flourishing, I rejoice—When I learn that such families, the honour of degenerate England, are likely to be extinct, my heart is grieved. And how should I be thankful, how feel myself elevated, if *my* daughter, marrying into such a family, should restore it, while *my* interest might obtain a renewal in her posterity of the fading honours of an illustrious race!

This was speaking at once pompously and plainly. But Mrs. Rayland was more offended by the air of

consequence assumed by the Doctor, than flattered by the fine things he said of her family; and she so little concealed her displeasure, that Mrs. Somerive, long weary of the parading and supercilious conversation of Mrs. Hollybourn, and who saw, by the Doctor's frequently looking towards Orlando, that the discourse was about him, and that Mrs. Rayland was displeased with it, arose and came towards them: she said something to Mrs. Rayland merely with a view to break the discourse, which was, however, immediately done much better by the General, who, afraid of being too particular, now left Isabella; and returning to the seat Doctor Hollybourn had seized, he cried, Come, come, my good Doctor, we soldiers are a little proud of our favour with the ladies, and we do not patiently see ourselves displaced by you churchmen. I shall not relinquish my seat by my excellent hostess.

The Doctor then got up; and fancying, from the softness and sweetness of Mrs. Somerive's manner, that he should in her meet a willing auditor, and perhaps the very best he could find for a scheme which acquired every moment new charms in his imagination, he asked if he should attend her to the other end of the room to look at the dancers; to which, as she was extremely restless and uneasy by the long absence of her eldest son, whom she every moment hoped to see enter, she readily assented.

The General then took possession of the post the Doctor had quitted; and being more used to every kind of approach, he made infinitely more progress with Mrs. Rayland, in obtaining her consent to Orlando's entering the army, than the Doctor had effected for his scheme, notwithstanding the splendour of his fortune, the accomplishments of his daughter, or his mention of his brother the bishop.

In the mean time the poor young man, who was

rendered by Mrs. Rayland's favour an object sought for by the divine, and by his own spirit an object of dread to the soldier, was half distracted, and knew not what he was about. It was now past the hour when he had promised Monimia to bring Selina to her; for, not expecting the unwelcome addition of the Hollybourn family, he concluded that, after going down a dance with one of the buxom daughters of the principal tenant, he could have slipped away at the end of it; and whispering his mother that he was going to shew Selina some of his drawings, and how he had ornamented his little tapestry room, that he might account for her absence, he should have had an uninterrupted hour with his most beloved sister and his Monimia.

Instead of this he now found himself fixed for the whole night to Miss Hollybourn; who had already declared that she found herself in such a humour for dancing, and that really the whole set was so much more tolerable than she expected, that she should not very soon wish to sit down. Poor Orlando, who had no excuse to offer for quitting her, had no hope but in the arrival of his brother, to whom he flattered himself he might resign this unenvied honour at least for one dance: but even this hope was very uncertain; for Philip might perhaps return no more to the room, or if he did, might be unwilling to accept the felicity of dancing with Miss Hollybourn, for he was not of a humour to put himself out of the way for any one; and, as he very seldom danced at all, would now, if he did join the dancers, much more probably select for his partner one of the handsome daughters of the tenants, with whom he could be more at home.

Thus the time which Orlando expected to have passed in so different a manner wore away. In vain he looked towards the door—no brother ar-

rived to succour him. The second dance was already at an end; and Isabella, who had, with her mother's permission, accepted the hand of a rich young farmer, while Selina and Emma danced together, had already called a third, and was flying down with a spirit and gaiety which quite enchanted her ancient lover; while Orlando, who on account of Miss Hollybourn still kept a place near the top, was preparing with an heavy heart to follow her, when his father, with an expression of extreme concern on his countenance, approached, and asked him if he knew where his brother was?

No, Sir, indeed I do not, answered Orlando; I cannot even guess—but, for God's sake, give me leave to go look for him. I see you are very uneasy at his absence.

I am indeed, replied Mr. Somerive, and your mother much more so.

Let me go, dear Sir, then, said Orlando eagerly.

No, no, answered his father:—Go down this dance, and take no notice—if then he does not come, go see if you can find him. I have been in search of him myself, but to no purpose. I fancied he might be in your room. I went to the library door, for I could have sworn I heard somebody walking there; but the door was locked, and I called and knocked at it in vain. If Philip was there, he had some reason—no good one, I fear—for not answering.

Orlando, now ready to sink into the earth, yet unable to fly from his intolerable task, began the dance, after having been twice called upon by his partner; but thinking only of the terror Monimia must have been in, while, shut up in the library, she heard his father at the door, and overwhelmed with vexation at being thus detained from her, he could no longer command that portion of attention that

was requisite even to the figure of the dance. But having blundered four or five times, turned the wrong women, and run against the men, then missed his time, and put every body out, he said in a hurrying way to Miss Hollybourn, who began to be much discomposed by his mistakes—I really beg a thousand pardons, but Isabella's dance is so extremely difficult I cannot go down it—I shall only distress you, Madam, by my blunders; had we not better go to the bottom?

Dear Sir, cried the lady bridling, I can find no such difficulty in it. If you would only take the trouble to attend a moment, I am sure I could explain it to you so that you *could* not make a mistake. —Now only observe—We first pass between the second and third couples—and I lead out the two gentlemen, and you the two ladies—then meet and allemande—then *le moulin* at bottom—then I turn the third gentleman—then you————

Orlando, unable to command himself, said, still more confusedly, No, upon my honour, I shall never do it. I am very sorry to disappoint you, Madam; and wish I could for this dance have recommended you another partner. He then bowed, and was walking away, when she bounced after him.

You don't imagine there is any other person here, cried she, biting the end of her fan—I hope you don't imagine there is any body else here with whom *I* shall dance!

Pardon me, Madam, said Orlando, taking her hand; here is my elder brother, who has even a better right to that honour than I have. At this moment his eyes were gratified by the sight of Philip, to whom he, without waiting for Miss Hollybourn's answer, led her, and cried, Dear Phil, here am I in the most awkward distress imaginable; Miss Hollybourn wishes to dance this dance down,

and I am so stupid I cannot do the figure. I am sure you will be very happy to supply my place.

Philip, who was never much disposed to sacrifice his own pleasure to the gratification of others, and who had schemes of his own on foot, answered with less than his usual ceremony (for he was never more polite for having drank a good deal):

A-hey, Sir Rowland! who told you so? How the devil should I, who am no dancer, execute what is too difficult for so perfect a caperer as thou art—Sir Knight?

Mortified beyond endurance at being thus rejected, Miss Hollybourn, disengaging her hand with an angry jerk from Orlando's, said haughtily—Pray, Mr. Orlando, spare yourself this trouble; I am content to sit still. She then walked away; and Orlando, not giving himself time to consider what he did, said in a whisper to Philip—If you have any compassion, my dear Phil, take her for this dance—I will be grateful, believe me, and will not desire to punish you with her above half an hour.

D—n her, a little carroty pug-nosed moppet! cried Philip, as ugly and as insolent as the devil—why should I take the trouble to humour her?

It will oblige me beyond expression, answered Orlando; it will oblige my father and mother.

Philip just then recollecting that he was upon his good behaviour, agreed, though with an ill grace; and Orlando eagerly carrying him up to Miss Hollybourn, who sat fanning herself and swelling at the top of the room, began a speech, in which he blundered worse than he had done in dancing; but Philip took it out of his hands, and said—Madam, I am so much in an habit, in *this* house, of giving the *pas* to my brother here, Sir Rowland, that I really dared not aspire to the honour of your fair hand till I perfectly understood that he had relin-

quished it for the present dance; but as he has now explained himself, if you will allow me the bliss of being his double, I will acquit myself to the best of my poor abilities; and if you, charming Miss Hollybourn, will deign to instruct me, you shall find, that under so lovely a preceptress I shall make up in docility for deficiency of practice.

Miss Hollybourn had so little natural sense among all her acquirements, that this speech, which from its substance, and still more from the manner of its delivery, was evidently meant in ridicule, seemed to her to be very polite, and made very much in earnest. She therefore, casting a look towards Orlando, much less sweet than those she had favoured him with towards the beginning of the evening, assented with a smirk to the proposal of his brother—and immediately joined the dancers; while Orlando, trembling lest some new interruption should again deprive him of the sight of Monimia, hastened to find Selina, to whom he beckoned, and whispered to her to come round another way, where he would meet her, that their going out together might not be remarked. He changed his mind about speaking to his mother, fearing lest she should propose going too, if the object was only to shew Selina his room; and he thought it better to risk an inquiry after Selina, which perhaps might not be made, or, if it were, might easily be answered.

It was the custom on these occasions for the inferior servants not to come into the hall till the Lady and her company, if she happened to have any, were withdrawn. When the business of the dinner and tea tables was over, they became spectators from a railed gallery, which over the entrance to the hall made a communication between the principal apartments above. Here the upper

house-maid, the footmen, and the cook had been stationed—Betty, (most superb in red ribbands) not quite so long as the rest.

Monimia had been forbidden by Mrs. Lennard to appear at all during any part of the evening; an injunction which she was not at all disposed to disobey. She was far, therefore, from envying Betty, who came into her room all in a flutter, as soon as she was dressed, to shew her finery, and descant on the pleasure she expected in dancing when Madam was gone, and the gentlefolks, and boasting how many solicitations she had already had from the young men. Monimia, glad to get her out of the room, thought only of fulfilling her engagement with Orlando, and of the pleasure and comfort of being made known to one of his sisters; yet her timidity and diffidence made her fear this interview as much as she wished it. Unconscious of the interesting sweetness of her countenance, and the simple graces of her form, she feared lest Selina might think her brother's affection ill placed, and blame his attachment to an object of so little merit. Under these impressions, she would have given herself all the advantages that dress afforded; but her scanty wardrobe left her very little choice, and she had no means of varying her appearance from what it usually was—a white muslin gown being the utmost of her finery. ' She took care, however, to dispose her hair in the most becoming manner she could; and having finished her little toilet, she descended with a palpitating heart and a light step to the part of the house through which she was to pass in going to the Study. It was now empty, for all the servants were in the gallery, waiting the departure of their Lady, to join the festivity of the night; and Monimia glided through the north wing, which was never at any time inhabited, and

without any misadventure reached the Study, where she waited in trembling suspense the arrival of Orlando and Selina.

Every body being engaged in the middle of the house, that part of it was as silent as if there was no bustle in the other, except the distant sound of the music in the great hall, to which Monimia, with the door of the Study a-jar, involuntarily listened; when she was suddenly alarmed by a voice in the adjoining parlour, talking and laughing, and apparently romping, and a man's voice answering in a half whisper, and begging of the first person, whom she knew to be Betty, to be more quiet. As her being discovered in Orlando's Study would have ruined her peace for ever, she shut-to the door as softly as she could, and turned the key. The conversation between the two people without appeared to be so animated, that she flattered herself they did not hear her; but as she still remained listening at the door, hardly daring to breathe, her terror was increased by hearing them approach and attempt to open it. Egad! it is locked, cried a voice which Monimia then first discovered to be young Somerive:—Does Sir Rowland always lock his door?

Generally he does, replied the other, but I dare say among the house keys there's one that will open it—yet, hang it, don't let us try. He'll come perhaps, and that you know will be very disagreeable.

He come! said Philip—No, no, he's safe enough—He dares as well jump into the fire as quit the post where the old woman has placed him—Come, come—see if there's no other key will open this door. Besides, as to his coming, what should he come here for? 'Tis more likely, if he can get away, he'll go to visit Miss in the turret.

Lord! cried Betty, how you have that notion stuffed in your head—when I tell you again and again, he no more meets Miss, as you calls her, than the child unborn. Sure I should know—— She! a poor innocent silly thing! I don't believe he takes any account of her——But hush! Oh gemini! who's there?

The voice of the elder Somerive was now heard, calling aloud in the passage leading to the parlour they were in for his eldest son. Philip! cried he, Philip!—where are you?

'Tis my father, said Philip—Cannot we get out without meeting him?

Oh yes, replied Betty; follow me, and don't speak for all the world.

She then opened another door which led out into the garden, which, as Orlando usually came in that way, was seldom locked; and as all this had passed in the dark, they glided away unperceived—not a moment however before Mr. Somerive, entering with a candle the room they had quitted, gave a new alarm to the terrified Monimia. Mr. Somerive, who had heard the footsteps of the fugitives as they left the parlour, imagined somebody was walking in the Study—He therefore tried the door, on the other side of which poor Monimia still stood trembling, and again loudly called on Philip Somerive; entreating him, if he was there, to answer him, and representing all the ill consequences of his thus disappearing abruptly, after having been received into an house where he had before given offence, but where it was so material for him to be thought well of. No answer however was returned; and at length Monimia heard Mr. Somerive close his fruitless remonstrance with a deep sigh, and depart.

These repeated alarms now seemed to subside, and a dead silence ensued, but still Orlando came

not. Monimia, not daring to have a candle lest the light should be discerned under the door, sat down in the window-seat which was the nearest to it, to listen for his arrival, though doubting from what his brother had said whether he would arrive at all. The large old library, half furnished with books and half hung with tapestry, and where the little light afforded by a waning moon gleamed faintly through the upper parts of the high casements which the window shutters did not reach, was perhaps the most gloomy apartment that fancy could imagine. Monimia looked round her, and shuddered—The affright she had undergone in the chapel, though it was explained, still dwelt upon a mind which had so early been rendered liable to the terrors of superstition; and she looked towards the door that opened to the passage of the chapel, fancying some hideous spectre would appear at it: or she reasoned herself out of such an idea, only to give way to one more horrid: and figured to herself that the ruffian whom Orlando had described to her, and whose name was held in dread by the whole country, might enter at it as he had once done before. Against this apprehension she might have been secured by satisfying herself that the door was locked; but she had not courage to cross the room.

Sitting therefore and listening to every sound, she again distinguished the music in the great hall, which, as the wind swelled or fell, floated through the rest of the house; and she could not help contrasting that scene of festive mirth with her dark and gloomy solitude: How happy, said she, are the Miss Somerives, and this other young lady! They, under the sanction of their parents, are gaily enjoying an innocent and agreeable amusement; while I, a poor unprotected being, wander about in dark-

ness and in dread, and, though I do nothing wrong, undergo the terrors and alarms of guilt. But, do I not act wrong? Alas! I am afraid I do—It *must* be wrong to carry on a clandestine correspondence, to meet by stealth a young man whom his friends would discard were they to know he met me at all—It must surely be wrong to incur imputations from which, if once they are believed, it is impossible I can ever be vindicated——wrong to let Orlando hazard, for me, the loss of Mrs. Rayland's favour—and wrong to put myself in the way of being believed no better than the servant, of whose light conduct I have seen so many instances, besides that which this moment happened, of her privately meeting Mr. Philip Somerive. How could I bear to be thought of by others as I think of her! and yet I seem to act as culpably. Oh Orlando! surely if you thought of this, you, who are so generous, so anxious for my happiness, would never expose me to it. Yet we must meet thus, or never meet at all! and could I bear to be deprived of seeing him for the little, the very little time that is yet to pass before he is sent from hence—never—never perhaps to return?

This sad idea filled her eyes with tears; and she was not recovered from the agony into which it threw her, when she again heard footsteps in the parlour—Somebody trode lightly along. Monimia listened, and fancied there was more than one person—Immediately the lock was turned; and the door being fastened, a voice, which she recognized with joy for that of Orlando, said, in a half-whisper: Monimia! are you not there? It is Selina and I—open the door therefore without apprehension. Monimia remembered, with affright, that the voices of the two brothers bore a great resemblance to each other, and she again hesitated. But Orlando speak-

ing louder, and her recollecting that his brother could not know that Selina was to accompany him, she, though with trembling apprehension, turned the key, and Orlando and his sister appeared.

.Let me, cried he, as he put Monimia into the arms of Selina—let me unite in bonds of everlasting friendship the two loveliest and most beloved of beings! Selina tried to say, Whoever is dear to Orlando is so to me, and I rejoice in thus being allowed to say so. But, though she had innocently studied the sentence, she was too much confused to make it articulate; and Monimia was quite unable to speak at all. In a moment, however, Orlando, attempting to hide the uneasy flutter of his own thoughts, approached them with a candle which he had lit at the embers of his fire; and, reminding them how short their interview must be, bade them both sit down—and let us, added he, endeavour to enjoy moments so brief and so precious.

CHAPTER XXII.

SELINA, as timid, and almost as new to the world as Monimia herself, was too much terrified at the risk Orlando ran, and at what she herself hazarded, to be soon composed. She could hardly, indeed, have been in greater trepidation had she escaped from the company to have met a lover of her own. Her eyes, however, were occupied in examining the face and figure of Monimia; and no feminine envy induced her to deny the existence of that beauty or sweetness of which Orlando had said so much She even thought Monimia more lovely than her brother had described her, yet she saw her to little advantage; for, the alarming situation she had been

in for almost an hour and a half, the apprehension lest Orlando should not come, the reflections which arose while she waited for him, and the emotion with which she now for the first time beheld his sister, had robbed her fair cheeks of their tender bloom; her eyes were swollen, and her voice was faultering and faint. Orlando seated her near Selina, and, sitting down by them, threw one arm round each of them: and, looking with a smile on both, said, Why, what silent girls you are! Selina! is it thus you greet your new friend? You who will talk to me of her for an hour, and never ceased soliciting of me to contrive this unhoped-for meeting? And you, Monimia! Come, come, I must have you more conversable. Let us consider, my dear girls, how you may meet hereafter; for, without accomplishing that, the present meeting will only serve to tantalize us all.

The tears, which she had for a moment restrained, again filled the eyes of Monimia. But, turning them tenderly on Orlando, she sighing said, Ah! how can I hope your sister Selina, amiable and indulgent as she seems, will again incur, for me, hazard which I see now makes her tremble, and fears which I myself can hardly endure? Indeed, Orlando, if you did but know what I have suffered since I waited here in expectation of your coming!—I know it, cried Orlando, imagining she alluded to his father's having been at the door of the study—But luckily you had taken the precaution to lock the door; which I, little suspecting that this part of the house would be visited, had neglected to desire. So, as my father neither saw nor suspected any thing but that my brother was in this room, there is no harm done, nor any thing to fear.

Monimia sighed, but thought it was improper, before Selina, to repeat the dialogue that she had

heard between Mr. Philip Somerive and his female companion. She was far, however, from believing there was nothing to fear; and their short conference was to her embittered with the dread of a discovery, which she could not conquer. Selina, trusting to the judgment of her brother, and desirous of obliging him, succeeded better in conquering the restraint she had at first felt; and, charmed with the voice, the manner and person of Monimia, she eagerly entered into his views, and talked over the means by which they might sometimes meet, if, as was too probable, invincible obstacles continued to be opposed to their seeing each other by the consent of Mr. and Mrs. Somerive—that of Mrs. Rayland could not be asked, and that of Mrs. Lennard they were sure would not be granted.

In this conversation Orlando spoke of what was to happen when he was gone, in terms that signified how certain he was that he should go. Monimia's heart sunk as he repeated, When *I* am not here, I cannot see that there can be any objection to your openly seeing my sisters.—Alas! thought she, what wretched company shall we then be to each other! yet to see the sisters of Orlando will always be a comfort to me. Selina too heard with extreme pain the frequent mention he made of his departure; and having, from many observations she had made on the behaviour of General Tracy, during his residence of almost five weeks in her father's house, conceived a very unfavourable opinion of him—her dislike amounted almost to detestation when she considered him as being the principal mover of the plan which was thus to rob her of her beloved brother. Whatever she thought of his conduct in other respects, she had the prudence to keep to herself, and affected to dislike him only on account of Orlando.

Among the various little schemes which were considered for the future acquaintance of Selina and Monimia, none seemed sufficiently safe to be adopted without farther consideration; but Orlando promised to think of them all, and to acquaint them both with the result of his reflections. It was by this time necessary to part—Orlando proposed leading his sister back to the room, and carrying her immediately to his mother, to tell her that she had been in his apartment, that any surprize excited by her absence might be ended without farther inquiry; while Monimia hoped to find her way back to her own room, as safely as she had before traversed the house in her way from it.

They were then reluctantly bidding adieu, when they were thunderstruck by an attempt from without to force open the door. Orlando, thrown for a moment entirely off his guard, turned pale; and casting towards Monimia a look of anguish and terror, he cried, Who can it be? what shall we do?—The tender timid Monimia had at this instant more presence of mind than he had: Let me go, said she, into your bedchamber—there I can lock myself in: then ask who it is; and, if it is one who has a right to inquire into your actions, open the door, and let him see you are sitting here with your sister. There was not a moment to deliberate, for the person without still tried to open the door. Orlando waved his hand to Monimia to execute her project:—she glided away, and shut after her the door, which was hung on both sides with tapestry and shut without noise, while Orlando demanded, in a loud and angry voice, who was at the door, and what was their business? At first a feigned voice answered, Open the door, good friends, and you shall know our business. Orlando answered, I shall not open it till I know to whom;—and then a vio-

lent burst of laughter discovered it to be Philip—who cried, Soho! have I caught you, Sir Rowland? Is this my good, pious, and immaculate brother? What folly is this! said Orlando angrily as he opened the door—and is it not strange that I cannot sit a moment in my own room with Selina, but you must break in upon us like a drunken constable? Gently, Sir Knight! answered Philip Somerive as he staggered into the room—fair and softly, if you please! no hard words to your elders, most valorous chevalier?—Selina is it?—By this light so it is! Well—I did not think, my good brother, you were so eager to put off your precious bargain upon me, only for the pleasure of a *tête-a-tête* with our little simple Selina. I thought you had very different game in view—Egad, I'm not clear now that I have been mistaken—Heh, child! added he, turning to Selina, are you very sure you are not a blind? why, my dear little whey face, what makes you look so pale?

Your strange behaviour, brother, said Selina, who tried to collect spirit enough to speak without betraying the agitation she was thrown into. Come, come, child! replied he, lectured as I am on all hands, I shall not let babes and sucklings preach to me. Your mamma, miss, won't be very well pleased, I can tell you, if she does not find you with the other misses; they are just going away, I believe. The old woman is gone up to her apartment, and the misses are ordered off. There's the General, like my mother's gentleman-usher, hunting the fair bevy together, and there will be a hue and cry after you in a moment.—Very well! answered Selina; Mamma will not be angry when she knows I am only with Orlando. And I, said Orlando, shall take care of her back; therefore you need not, Philip, be under any concern about her.

Well, then, cried this tormentor, as I am cursed tired, my dear knight, and have got a devilish headach, prithee, when thou art gone, lend me thy apartment for half an hour's quiet. I've promised George Green and half a dozen more of them, to meet them by and by in Pattenson's room, and make out the night according to good old custom; and if I get a nap while the sober party, the cats and the kittens, are trundling off, I shall escape all the plaguy formality of—Wish you good night, dear ma'am!—hope you'll catch no cold!—shall be glad to hear you got home safe!—most agreeable evening indeed!—wish we may meet here this time twelvemonth!—and such mawkish cant; and I shall be as fresh as morning to meet the good fellows by and by—So, come, Sir Rowly, lend me your bed for a little. I'll send in pretty Betty, added he leering, to make it for you before you come to bed.

Orlando, fearing, from this strange proposal, his brother was aware how impossible it was for him to grant it, now looked more confused than ever, and said very peevishly, You are so drunk now, Philip, that it will be much wiser and more decent for you to go home directly—I at least will have nothing to do with your stay. Come, Selina, let us go—Philip, I will follow you.

No, indeed you will not! replied he, sitting himself down by the fire. If you won't lend me your bed, you will at least let me have a chair.

I will leave nobody in my room, said Orlando warmly.

What! hast got any bank-notes? has thy old woman given thee a little hoard? Egad she has!—I've a good mind to rummage, that I may know what brotherly help thou couldst give in case of a bad run.

This is insupportable! cried Orlando:—What shall I do with him? whispered he to Selina. Poor Selina, unable to advise, was in as great consternation as the half distracted Orlando, who walked about the room a moment, considering by what means he could disengage himself from this troublesome visitor; but unable to think of any, he was beginning, in mere despair, to expostulate with him anew, when the approach of other persons was heard in the parlour; and Mr. Somerive himself, apparently in great displeasure, entered the Library.

Orlando! cried he, Philip! Selina! what is all this? to what purpose are ye all here?—Selina! your mother is much amazed at your absence.

Orlando, then collecting his scattered thoughts, related, that he had merely brought Selina thither for a few moments to shew her his apartments, which she had never seen; and that while they were sitting quietly together, Philip, whose situation, Sir, you see, said he, came in, and I could not prevail upon him to leave us, or to suffer us to return altogether to the company.

Mr. Somerive, now speaking with an air of authority and concern to his eldest son, received only an account of his request to Orlando, which, he insisted upon it, was a very reasonable one. You are indeed, said his father, fit only to go to bed; but it must not be in Mrs. Rayland's house—you must come, Sir, with me.

Young Somerive then arose to obey; for his father, when he was present, and had resolution to be peremptory, still retained some power over him. He staggered however so much that he was unable to proceed. Mr. Somerive bade Orlando assist him, which he was willing enough to do; but as Philip leaned upon him he whispered, Sir

Knight! if I can give the reverend senior the slip, I will still have my nap, and finish the evening with those joyous souls; d—me if I don't!

This threat terrified Orlando more than ever; he knew how likely it was to be executed; and therefore, in the hope that he might be able presently to return and release Monimia, whose longer absence from her room might be attended with the most alarming consequences, he hastily determined to lock the study door, and thus convince his brother that his scheme of returning thither, to which he saw he adhered either with the stupid obstinacy of intoxication, or disguising, under its appearance, knowledge more destructive, was impracticable. He, therefore, as soon as they were all out of the room, locked the door, and, saying aloud he had done so, he proceeded before his father, with a candle in his hand, to the apartment where Mrs. Rayland, much fatigued with the exertions of the evening, was taking leave of her guests. Philip, who seemed by no means in a condition to appear before her, had been consigned, in the way, to the care of one of the men-servants, who had seated him by the fire in a passage parlour, where he was in a few moments fast asleep.

Mrs. Somerive, to whom Selina's absence was easily accounted for, gently chid her for not saying whither she was going; and the long ceremonies of good-night on all hands being at length over, Orlando handed to her coach the nymph whom he had, in her opinion, so ungallantly forsaken. He found her so much hurt at being made over to his brother, who probably had not acquitted himself to her satisfaction, that he found it necessary to apologize, at which however he was extremely awkward, assuring her, with much hesitation, that

he was not aware that she would so soon quit the dancing-room, and that he flattered himself with the expectation of being honoured with her hand in a dance, where he could acquit himself in a manner more worthy so excellent a partner.

The lady received his excuses with coldness and disdain; but the Doctor, who heard, seemed more willing to accept them in good part. I never suspected, Sir, cried the consequential Divine, that, with your understanding, you could fail to appreciate the lady whose hand you held—It is not the fond partiality of the father, but common candour, which leads me to say, that of equals she has few in merit, superiors none. I hope we shall meet here again, Mr. Orlando; and that we shall see you, with good Mr. and Mrs. Somerive, and their fine family, at Combe Park. Good Mrs. Rayland, I heartily hope, that most worthy lady, who bears her years surprisingly well, will be able, before the winter's rigorous advances lay an embargo on valetudinarians; I say, I hope my excellent old friend will fix on some day to grace our poor abode, and sacrifice with us to the hospitable deities.

Orlando bowed his assent to a speech which he began to fear would last all night.—No effort of his, however, could have stopped the stream of the Doctor's eloquence, when once it began to flow; but fortunately Mrs. Hollybourn found it cold, and said peevishly, Dear Doctor! you keep Ann in a thorough air—Pray consider—she has been dancing, and I tremble for the effects of such a current of air——

Blessings on your care! thought Orlando, who was in the most extreme uneasiness all this time, lest Monimia, who he knew could not escape from his room, should be missed in her own. The

parade, however, that was yet made before this family were seated in their carriage, took up several minutes more; and even when Orlando had at length the satisfaction to see them driven from the door, he was compelled to attend to the disposal of his father, his mother, his four sisters, and the General, who could not for some time settle how they should return—the General being solicitous to take two of the young ladies in his post-chaise, to which Mrs. Somerive very peremtorily objected, to the amazement of her husband, who, not having the least idea of her motives, cried, Bless me, my dear; it will be better surely to put any two of the girls under the care of General Tracy, than to crowd him with me and Philip, who, if we can find him, is not, I fear, in a state to travel without incommoding his companions.—Well, then, replied Mrs. Somerive, frightened at having said more than she intended, I will have the pleasure of going in the General's carriage, and Emma can sit between us without inconvenience. In this arrangement the General was obliged to acquiesce, and even to appear pleased with it, though it baffled the schemes he had been laying the whole evening. This second carriage then departed; and now Orlando, who could well have left his sisters in the care of his father, would have flown to his imprisoned Monimia—But a new difficulty arose: his brother, for whom search had been making, as well in the room where he had been left sleeping, as in every other part of the house that had been opened for company, was no where to be found.

The Somerive family had all taken their leave of Mrs. Rayland, and waited in a parlour near the hall. Mr. Somerive now expressed great alarm at the ill success of those inquiries that had been made

after his eldest son. Perhaps, Sir, said Orlando—perhaps my brother, finding himself, when he awoke, unfit to appear, is gone home on foot. Orlando had indeed very different conjectures; and, in the whole tenor of his behaviour that evening, found reason to fear that he had but too positive information relative to Monimia, and was determined to detect her. This apprehension, and the dread of her being missed by her aunt, who would in all probability visit her room as soon as the company were dispersed, gave to Orlando's manner such wildness and confusion as increased the distress of his father. Orlando repeated, I am persuaded, Sir, Philip is gone home—I dare say you may yourself return quite easy.

Are you so easy yourself then? answered Mr. Somerive—I think not, Orlando, from your countenance. Even admitting that my son has walked homeward, and will not commit any impropriety which shall expose him, or injure him in the opinion of Mrs. Rayland, is there nothing to fear for the safety of a man who has such a road to travel, in such a state?

Let me, Sir, go then, and seek for him on that road; and do you, I entreat you, return home and make yourself easy. A longer delay will not only alarm my mother, but occasion inquiries on the part of Mrs. Rayland, who will probably hear of it by her servants;—nor can it indeed answer any purpose, since every search that can be made has already been made within the house.

Have you the key of your own apartment?

I have, Sir, replied Orlando, trembling lest his father was about to ask for it. I locked the door of the Study when we all left it together.

He cannot therefore be there, said Mr. Somerive, musing—I cannot conjecture where he can be!

Pray, Sir, cried Orlando, pray be composed, and suffer me to go the park-way homeward—I am persuaded my brother is safe.

He does not indeed, said Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh—he does not deserve the solicitude I feel for him. Orlando, on you I depend for finding and conducting him home.

Orlando solemnly assured his father and his sisters that he would do so; and as their remaining longer at the Hall contributed nothing towards relieving their uneasiness, they at length determined to go.

When they were gone, Orlando hoped that the alarms of the night were over, and that Mrs. Lennard, as the tenants and all the servants were still dancing in the hall, would not have time to think of the usual ceremony of locking Monimia's door at ten o'clock. It was now however twelve.

With a palpitating heart then he went to find her. She was still locked in his bedchamber, where, half distracted by fears of every kind, she had had sufficient time to reflect on all the hazards she incurred by these clandestine meetings with Orlando; and sometimes determined, if she escaped detection this time, never to be prevailed upon to venture it again.—Then the sad recollection, that he would soon cease to ask it, and that, if she did not meet him thus, she must relinquish the pleasure of ever speaking to him at all, shook the resolution which fear and prudence united to produce;—and she almost wished, dreadful as it would at the moment be, that a discovery might compel them to the expedient Orlando once named—that of their flying together, and trusting to Providence for the rest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ORLANDO found Monimia alarmed and dejected; but hardly giving himself time to re-assure her, and account for his long absence, he besought her to hasten to her room—I hope, said he, and believe the house is quite uninhabited on this side still, for all the servants are in the hall. My brother is missing, and I have promised my father to find him and conduct him home. What a task! for I know not where to look for him; not a moment must be lost, since my family are in such cruel alarms. However, I will wait here, my Monimia, till I think you are safe in your turret, and then set out —I know not whither—on this search.

Monimia hastened to do as he desired. But is Betty, said she, in the hall? I have reasons, which I have not now time to explain, for believing they are together. I know not, answered Orlando, whose fears every moment increased; I care not what happens if you are but once in safety.

Monimia then with light and timid steps passed through the adjoining parlour. She found all that end of the house deserted, and regained the long passage which led from her turret to the apartment of her aunt. All was quiet; and she flattered herself that Mrs. Lennard, occupied by the attention necessary to be shewn to the guests, had for once omitted the ceremony of locking the doors of that part of the house, and particularly hers, at the usual hour. In this hope she tripped along the passage, and had just reached the door of her own room, when Mrs. Lennard, with a candle in her hand, appeared at the other end. There was no hope of escape—She stood trembling, unable to open the lock, which she held in her hand; while her aunt

with a hasty step and an angry countenance advanced towards her—Hey-day, Madam! cried Mrs. Lennard,pray, what makes you here? so dressed too, I assure you! I thought I had ordered you not to leave your room. Pry'thee, Miss, where have you been? and how have you dared to disobey my orders?

Dear aunt, cried the affrighted Monimia, in a voice almost inarticulate through fear—Dear aunt! be not so very angry—Every year till now you were so good as to give me leave to go into the hall gallery to look at the dancers for a quarter of an hour. I dressed myself in hopes that some time in the evening I should see you to ask leave—it grew very late, you did not come to my room, and so—

And so, hussey, you left it without, did you?—Monimia, unwilling to advance another direct falsehood, remained silent; and Mrs. Lennard, fixing her fierce inquiring eyes upon her, said sternly, Monimia, there is something in your conduct which I do not understand—I suspect that you are a very wicked girl—I have had hints given me more than once, that you are imposing upon me, and ruining yourself.

How can I impose upon you, Madam? said Monimia, who, believing the crisis of her fate was now approaching, tried to collect a little spirit—How can I impose upon you? Do you not always confine me to my room, and have I any means of leaving it without your consent?

That is what I am determined to discover, cried Mrs. Lennard—(Monimia became paler than before)—You have a false key, or you have some other means of getting out—However, it is not at present a time to inquire into this. Go now, Madam, to your room, and to your bed. Having seen you here is enough to convince me, that the intel-

ligence I have had given me is not without grounds. Come, Miss, as you may perhaps choose to set out again—if you have, as I suspect, the means of opening the door—I shall wait here till you are in bed, and take away the candle.

Monimia, who dreaded nothing so much as that Orlando might ascend the secret stairs, in order to inquire if she was safe, while her aunt was yet with her, hastened to undress herself; and as she feared that, if all were silent in her room, Orlando might speak without the door, which would inevitably discover them at once, she wished, for the first time in her life, that the copious stream of eloquence with which the pleasure of scolding always supplied Mrs. Lennard might now continue in full force—she therefore contrived to say something which she imagined would produce this, and she succeeded. Provoked at Monimia's attempt to excuse or defend herself, and impatient at being kept from the party below, in which she considered herself, now that her lady and the guests were withdrawn, as the first figure, Mrs Lennard spared not her lungs, nor was she very nice in the choice of those epithets which most forcibly expressed her anger against her niece. In the midst of this harangue, Orlando, impatient to know whether Monimia was safe, and unable to set out in search of his brother till he had obtained this satisfaction, softly ascended the narrow stairs, and in a moment was convinced that all their escapes, during this perilous evening, had ended in a complete discovery of their intelligence; for to nothing less could he impute the fury in which Mrs. Lennard appeared to be. Under this impression, his spirits and temper quite exhausted by the various perverse accidents that had within a few hours befallen him—irritated by frequent disappointment, and indignant at the insults to which he

believed Monimia was at the moment exposed, he was on the point of bursting into the room, declaring his affection for her, and meeting at once the invectives of her aunt, the renunciation of all his hopes from Mrs. Rayland, and the displeasure of his own family. He blamed himself for not having before taken a step which, whatever might be its future consequence, would at least be decisive, and save Monimia from those cruel alarms and distressing conflicts to which his love had so long made her liable. But at the moment that his hand was lifted to execute this rash purpose, the storm within seemed to abate: he heard Mrs. Lennard say—I assure you, that the very next time I see or hear the least grounds for believing you are carrying on such a correspondence, that day shall be the last of your stay under this roof. This gave Orlando hope that they might not be absolutely discovered; and at the same moment the idea of his father made more unhappy, and deploring the fate that gave him two sons equally careless of their duty—of his beloved and affectionate mother weeping at the disobedience of her children—arose forcibly to check his precipitate resolution. He hesitated; he listened; Mrs. Lennard spoke lower, but still in a tone of remonstrance and reproach. He determined to wait to speak to Monimia after her departure, but she seemed not likely to depart; and as he attentively listened to what he could not now very exactly distinguish, the terms in which she expressed her indignation, he heard several voices calling him in the park. This was a new alarm—To issue from the lower part of the turret at such an hour, when it was impossible he could have any business there, was not to be thought of: yet the door was not closed, and he believed it not improbable that the people whom he apprehended were in search of his

brother, might at length seek *him* there; as his intoxication, when he was missing, might lead them to imagine that he might have gone into some of the buildings and have fallen aleep. He descended, therefore, and waited at the door. The voices were now at a distance; and apparently being near the apartment of Mrs. Rayland, the persons who had before called aloud were afraid of disturbing her. He seized this opportunity of escaping; and, following the sound, which was still heard at intervals, he met at length the groom and the under footman, who told him that Mr. Philip Somerive had returned about a quarter of an hour before into the room, where he was now so extremely riotous that he had got into a quarrel with one of the young farmers; that he had stripped to box; and that every interposition of theirs only served to enrage him more. They therefore besought Orlando to return into the hall, that he might appease and prevail upon his brother to go home; for that their lady, already alarmed by the noise, had sent down orders to have the house immediately shut up, and for the people to depart. A thousand times during the course of this evening had poor Orlando execrated his own folly, that had thus brought his brother into an house, where, while he had been such an unceasing torment to him, he had probably effectually ruined himself. But there was now not a moment to give way to these repentant reflections. He hastened therefore into the room, where his brother, awakened from the stupor of drunkenness into its most extravagant phrensy, had taken some offence at a young man of the company, and was now withheld only by the united strength of three stout farmers from fighting. Orlando for some time argued and implored in vain. The fury of Philip only changed its object, and was directed against him. But

with his opponent, whose blunt English spirit was not, as he declared, at all disposed to yield tamely to the insults of any 'squire, no not the biggest 'squire in the king's dominions, the cool reasoning of Orlando had more effect. He soothed then this justly offended rustic, and, promising that Philip should hereafter acknowledge the impropriety of his behaviour, he prevailed on him to depart with Pattenson and some other of the men into another room; and then his brother being almost exhausted, and relapsing again into stupidity, Orlando wished to conduct him home. This was, however, on consideration, found to be impossible; for he was equally unable to ride or walk, even with the assistance which Orlando was very ready to lend him. In this dilemma nothing remained but to put him into his own bed; where, being at a great distance from Mrs. Rayland, there was no probability of her knowing the state to which his intemperance had reduced him. This then he determined to do. Pattenson and a party of the men who were in habits of drinking had already withdrawn: the women were huddling away to their respective homes; and Orlando, with the help of the groom, carried off the almost senseless Philip to his own bedchamber, where he left him on his bed; and then, harrassed and unhappy as he was, fatigued with all that had happened, and torn to pieces with anxiety about Monimia, he yet had another task to perform, which he felt, however painful, to be necessary—and this was, to walk to West Wolverton, that by his account of Philip he might quiet the fears of his father as to his personal safety.

He arrived there, quite worn out with uneasiness; and the pale countenance and dishevelled hair with which he entered the parlour, seemed to confirm all the fears with which the unfortunate Somerive had

been tormented on account of his eldest son. He found him walking backwards and forwards in the parlour, listening to every noise: and he had passed the whole interval in this manner, except that he had now and then gone up stairs to his wife, whom he had prevailed upon to go to bed, to persuade her to mitigate those fears under which he was himself agonized. At this juncture the appearance of Orlando, whose looks seemed to speak only of some sad catastrophe, deprived his father for a moment of the power of asking what intelligence he brought; and when he could speak, it was only to say—Orlando! your brother? He is safe, dear Sir, answered Orlando; pray be not thus alarmed. Relate then, cried Mr. Somerive in an eager voice, relate where he is—wretched boy! Indeed, Sir, said Orlando, extremely shocked at the look and manner of his father, you consider this matter more seriously than it deserves, and are more alarmed than the occasion seems to require. He then related what had happened, softening however his brother's folly as much as he could; and assured his father that he would take care Philip should return in the morning, and that Mrs. Rayland should be kept ignorant of the confusion his intemperance had occasioned.

You are a noble and excellent creature, Orlando, cried Somerive, with a sigh as if his heart would break; but God knows what will become of your unhappy brother. This relapse into debauchery, so degrading, awakens all my fears—fears, which a little subsided on his unexpected return home. But it is not an hour, my dear boy, to detain you with the misery that I see awaits us all. Since you have given up your bed to Philip, I desire you will take one here, while I hasten to quiet the anxiety which has almost overcome your poor mother,

who imagined nothing less than that her son was drowned, or that some other horrid calamity had befallen him.

Mr. Somerive then departed; and Orlando, though somewhat comforted by having the power to relieve the sad solicitude of his parents, was infinitely too uneasy to feel any inclination to sleep, though he was so greatly fatigued. It was by this time daylight; and, after some reflection, he resolved to return back to the Hall, and to await in the library the hour when he should be delivered from the unwelcome inmate whom he had been compelled to admit. Every other anxiety however that assailed him was unfelt, when he thought of the situation in which he had left Monimia. The harsh tones in which the threats of Mrs. Lennard were delivered still rung in his ears; and his fancy represented the lovely victim of her ill humour drowned in tears, yielding to despair, and perhaps recollecting with anguish and regret the moments she had given to his importunate love. It was broad day by the time he returned to the Hall, and the workmen and gardeners were dispersed about the house. He dared not therefore indulge himself with another visit to the turret; but having with some difficulty obtained admittance from the tired and sleepy servants, he wrapped himself in his great coat, and sat down in the Study, where he easily discovered, by the loud snoring from the adjoining room, that Philip was sleeping away the effects of the powerful draughts of the preceding night. Orlando, half tempted to envy the state of forgetfulness into which he had fallen, occupied himself in reflecting on the strange and perverse accidents of the evening, in which he and Monimia had trembled so often on the brink of discovery—perhaps were discovered, just at the time when they

had flattered themselves with the hope that they might the more securely meet. He resolved all that was likely to happen if Mrs. Lennard was really acquainted with their correspondence; and hesitated not to resolve, in that case, to go to his father, to declare his affection for Monimia, and to rescue her from the tyranny of her aunt, whatever might ensue. On the other hand, if their acquaintance yet remained doubtful, or only suspected, he saw that prudence and duty, his tenderness for Monimia, and his affection for his father, equally dictated their present separation; and that, to whichever of these he listened, they agreed in pointing out his leaving Monimia now, to acquire some establishment which might give them at least a probability, without the breach of any duty, of being happily united hereafter. There was something humiliating to his ingenuous mind, in all the arts and prevarications which their clandestine correspondence compelled him to use himself, and to teach the innocent Monimia. A thousand times he wished that he had been born the son of a day-labourer; that his parents, entertaining for him no views of ambition, had left him to pursue his own inclinations. A thousand times he lamented that Monimia was not circumstanced like Miss Hollybourn, that he might openly have addressed her: and the image of the arrogant heiress arose with redoubled disgust to his mind, when he compared her situation with that of his desolate orphan Monimia. More than three hours passed away while these thoughts were fluctuating in his mind. At the end of that time he was aroused by the entrance of Betty, who pertly demanded if he did not choose any breakfast?

He desired to have it brought. To which the girl replied, Perhaps you had rather breakfast with

the old women?—Whom do you mean? inquired Orlando.

Mean! answered she; why, who should I mean, but mistress, and mother Lennard? There's no other old woman in the house as I knows on, nor there had not need. They've been inquiring after you.

After me?

Yes, replied Betty. And Madam I suppose will tie you on to her apron-string soon, for she is never easy without you. Upon my word, Mr. Orlando, you look a little rakish though, I think, for such a *sober* young gentleman, and considering too that you did not demean yourself with dancing as you used to do with us servants, after the gentlefolks were gone. I warrant however that you did not pass the time at prayers.

You give your tongue strange license, said Orlando, who endeavoured to conceal his vexation, for he imagined that all alluded to Monimia. However, do tell me, if Mrs. Rayland wishes me to breakfast with her?

I knows nothing about her wishes, replied the girl; I only knows that Lennard have been asking every servant in the house about you, and cross-questioning one so that I suppose she thoft I had got you locked up in my cupboard, as they say she used for to have the men-folk in her younger days in the housekeeper's store-room. The old woman and the oven for that! Set a thief to catch a thief!

I do desire, said Orlando, that you would have done with all this, and tell me whether Mrs. Lennard expects me at breakfast? However, added he, pausing, I will alter my dress, and wait upon her at all events; and do be so good as to prepare in the mean time some breakfast for my brother.

Betty then left him apparently with pleasure to

execute this last commission; and Orlando, after changing his clothes, went to Mrs. Lennard's room to inquire whether Mrs. Rayland wished to speak to him, and at what time he might wait upon her. This however was not his only motive; he thought he should immediately discern by Mrs. Lennard's reception of him, whether his fears of a partial or an entire discovery were well founded. He fortunately found Mrs. Lennard in the housekeeper's room; and, accosting her with his usual interesting address, he inquired how Mrs. Rayland did after the fatigues of the evening, how she was herself, and whether he might at any time that morning make a personal inquiry after Mrs. Rayland?

The sage housekeeper received his civilities with great coolness, and answered, even with some asperity, that Mrs. Rayland was much better than ever she could have expected after so much company. As to your inquiring after her, Sir, added she, I don't know indeed how that may be; perhaps (fixing on him her penetrating eyes) there are *other* people in the house after whom you would *rather* ask.

Orlando, whose conscious blood rose into his cheeks at this speech, felt them glow, and the sensation increased his confusion. No, replied he, hesitating. No, certainly you cannot . . . . . suppose . . . that there is any body . . . . . that I . . . . . that I wish to inquire after more than Mrs. Rayland . . . . . I was much afraid that the fatigue would be too much for her.

There are other people, replied the lady, who were fatigued also. I must beg the favour of you, Mr. Orlando, not to interfere with my niece. I suppose it was by your desire or contrivance that she took the liberty of leaving her room last night, contrary to my positive orders.

Orlando, a little recovered from his consternation, endeavoured to laugh this off, and was proving to Mrs. Lennard that it was impossible for *him* to have occasioned this disobedience, when a summons came for her to attend Mrs. Rayland; and I was ordered, Sir, said the footman, to desire you would come up also, if you were about the house.

Mrs. Lennard now stalked away with great dignity, and Orlando followed her, more than ever alarmed for Monimia.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INSTEAD of the reproaches Orlando expected to hear, Mrs. Rayland received him, if not with so much cordial kindness as usual, at least without any appearance of anger. After the usual compliments on his part, and some inquiries on hers, whether all those who were immediately her guests had gone as soon as they left her, Mrs. Lennard withdrew, and Orlando was left alone with the old lady, and again trembled lest some remonstrances were to be made; for his mind was so entirely occupied by that subject, that he forgot it was possible for the attention of others to be differently engaged.

His apprehensions increased, when Mrs. Rayland, after a solemn silence, thus began:

I believe, Mr. Orlando, I have given you abundant proof that I esteem you above the rest of my kinsman's family.

Orlando bowed, and would have said that he was sensible of and grateful for her kindness; he could make nothing of the sentence—but blushed, and faltered while Mrs. Rayland went on.

Your father has once or twice proposed sending

you out into the world, and has consulted me upon the occasion. I suppose you are not unacquainted with the plan he has lately thought proper to propose for you.

Orlando, relieved by hearing that her discourse did not tend whither he feared it would, said that he knew General Tracy had offered his father to procure him a commission; an offer, Madam, continued he, of which I waited to hear your opinion before I myself ventured to form any wishes upon the subject.

This was carrying his complaisance farther than he had ever yet done. But, confused and apprehensive as he was, he said any thing which might turn the discourse from what he most dreaded, without having his mind enough at liberty to inquire rigorously into the truth or propriety of what he uttered; and even the independent spirit he had always prided himself on supporting, was lost amid his fears for Monimia.

Mrs. Rayland looked at him steadily for a moment—

You are ready then, said she, to follow any line of life, Orlando, which your friends approve?

I am, Madam! and always have been.

And you do not dislike the army?

Very far from it, Madam.

I have been accustomed from my youth, reassumed the old lady after another pause, to consider the profession of arms as one of those which is the least derogatory to the name of a gentleman.

It is honourable, Madam, to any name.

My grandfather, continued Mrs. Rayland, after whom you were by the permission of our family called—my grandfather, I say, Sir Orlando Rayland, appeared with distinguished honour in the service of his master in 1685, against the rebel

Monmouth, though not of the religion of King James. My father Sir Hildebrand distinguished himself under Marlborough, when he was a younger brother, and saw much service in Flanders. Of remoter ancestors, I could tell you of Raylands who bled in the civil wars; we were always Lancastrians, and lost very great property by our adherence to that unhappy family during the reigns of Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third. My great great grandfather, who was also called Orlando . . . .

Mrs. Rayland had soon totally forgotten the young hero who was before her, while she ran over the names and exploits of heroes past; and, lost in their loyalty and their prowess, she forgot that hardly any other record of them remained upon earth than what her memory and their pictures in the gallery above afforded. Orlando, however, heard her not only with patience but with pleasure. In recurring thus to them when the question of his professional choice was before her, it appeared that she had somehow associated the idea of his future welfare with that of their past consequence; and besides the satisfaction this discovery afforded him, he began to hope that his fears of any discovery were quite groundless.

Mrs. Rayland having at length completed the catalogue of the warriors of her family, and having no more to say, returned to the subject which had given rise to this discussion.—Therefore, young kinsman, I say, that if this worthy General Tracy will favour you with his countenance, if your father and your relations approve of it, and if you yourself are disposed for the profession of arms, I shall be glad not only to give you some assistance towards setting out, but to aid you from time to time

in such means of promotion as the General may point out to me.

Orlando, who now found the whole affair decided, felt one pang at the certainty which presented itself, that he must quit, soon quit his beloved Monimia; it was severe, but momentary: and with equal warmth and sincerity he thanked Mrs. Rayland for her goodness, and assured her that he was ready to avail himself of her generous intentions in his favour.

But are you sure, Mr. Orlando, added Mrs. Rayland interrupting his acknowledgments—are you quite sure that no unworthy connection, no improper attachment here, will make the departure for your regiment disagreeable to you?

The blood that had so often been the treacherous emissary of conscience before, now flew to the cheeks of Orlando; indeed his whole countenance changed so much that Mrs. Rayland, though not very clear-sighted, perceived it. Her brow took that severe look which it almost always lost in the presence of her young favourite—I see, cried she, observing Orlando still hesitate—I see that I have not been misinformed.

Every thing seemed to depend on the presence of mind which he was at this moment able to exert. He recovered himself, and said, in a firm and calm tone, I know not, Madam, what information you have received; but this I know, and do most solemnly assure you, that I have no unworthy connection, no improper attachment—and, added he, animated by reflecting that his love for the innocent, amiable Monimia was neither—and when you discover that I deceive you, I am content to relinquish your favour for ever.

Indeed you will lose it, answered Mrs. Rayland, a little relaxing of her severity;—and that I may

still have the pleasure of supposing you worthy my good opinion, and that well disposed young man which I have always wished to find you, your leaving this place a while may not be amiss. I know how to make some allowance for the arts of wicked girls; but I shall take care that no such person disgraces my family for the future. In regard to you, cousin, I hope you are above any such unworthy thoughts. It must be my business to give proper directions for the rest, and for the due regulations of my family. You will prepare, cousin, for your commission, which the worthy General tells me he expects every day: he assures me it is worth upwards of four hundred pounds. Your father is very happy in having met with a real friend.—Orlando, thunderstruck by a speech which he believed related to Monimia, stood like a statue. It was fortunate for him that Mrs. Rayland, after the words wicked girls, continued to speak; for, had she not done so, Orlando would infallibly have betrayed himself by entering into a warm defence of Monimia; he would indeed have confessed without reserve, their long attachment, and frequent interviews; but the rest of her speech and the entrance of Mrs. Lennard, for whom she rung just as she concluded it, gave him time to recollect himself: yet when Mrs. Rayland, in her usual way, dismissed him, he doubted whether his honour and his love did not call upon him to come to an immediate explanation. The consideration and kindness which Mrs. Rayland expressed for him, so unlike the usual prudish asperity of her disposition, were offensive and hateful to him when he believed she acquitted him at the expense of Monimia. He hastened however to his own apartment, because it was necessary to see what was become of his brother. It was some alleviation to his confusion

and distress to find Philip was gone; and he sat down, endeavouring to collect his thoughts, and to determine on what was to be done.

That Monimia was on his account to be dismissed from the house of Mrs. Rayland, and the protection of her only relation, the circumstances of the preceding night, added to what he had just heard, left him but little reason to doubt. What then was to become of her? and how could he make her any reparation for the injury he had done her, but by instantly declaring the truth, and relinquishing all prospect of future prosperity, from which she must be excluded?—Desperate as he felt this step to be, he was in a state of mind that urged him to decide on any thing that might bring their fate to a crisis: and, believing himself finally determined, he started up from his short counsel with himself, and was going hastily to the apartment of Mrs. Rayland, when at the door he was stopped by Betty, who with her hat on, and a small bundle in her hand, dropped him a curtsey, and said, with an arch smile, I'm come to take my leave of you, 'Squire, and to wish you well.

Whither are you going then, Betty? said Orlando?

Lord, Sir, cried the girl, you're such another hard-hearted gentleman!—What I warrant you don't know that Madam have sent me down my wages, with orders to go out of her house directly, and all upon your account.

Upon my account!—Pattenson it seems have been telling more false lies to Madam. He won't believe ever since that night that somebody was seen in your room—I don't know who, not I—but that you and I be too great: Madam Lennard would never hear on't till to-day; but now they've found out, by laying their old noddles together,

that I was out of the house that night, and they say 'twas along a you. Knowing my own innocence, I bears it all; for I be clear of the charge, as you know very well: I wish every body could say as much; but I know what I know.

Orlando now instantly comprehended that it was of Betty Mrs. Rayland had spoken, and not of the innocent Monimia, whom his rash impatience was again on the point of betraying. Sensible of his good fortune in having been thus prevented, he was still confused and agitated. Whatever you know, Betty, said he, of me, I am at least very sorry you have, by any mistake relative to me, lost your place, and Mrs. Lennard's favour.

As to *her* favour, answered the girl pertly, I values it no more than that; and she had better keep her tongue within her teeth about me, I can tell her that; and as for places, there's more in the world. One should have a fine time on't, indeed, to pass all one's life in this here old dungeon, among rats, and ghosts, and old women. However, young 'Squire; I advises you as a friend, to take more care for the future: some people are very sly; but for my part I scorn to betray um—but mayhap the next housemaid mid'nt be so willing as I have been to bear the blame for things she's as innocent of as the child unborn.

I cannot tell to what you allude, replied Orlando in a hurried voice; but this I know, that if I have done you any injury, I am very sorry for it, and willing to make you any reparation in my power. He then took a guinea from his pocket—Accept of this, cried he, and be assured I shall on any future occasion be happy to serve you.—The girl took the guinea, but without expressing any gratitude either for that, or his apparent wishes to make her what amends he could for the loss of her

place: she flippantly told him, she hoped, for all Madam's injustice, and the malice of her enemies, she had *friends* who would not let her be beholden to nobody—She then left the house.

Orlando, thus relieved from the most acute uneasiness he had ever suffered, returned to his room. He most ardently wished to communicate to Monimia the joy he felt in finding that the suspicions excited by so many awkward circumstances, had by some means or other fallen upon this servant; and apparently without doing her any injury, which would have considerably lessened his satisfaction. Far from regretting her dismission, she seemed pleased with having had an opportunity given her to be dismissed; and Orlando, who had long known her to be a very improper associate for Monimia, found many reasons to be glad of her departure. That she knew, or very strongly suspected their meetings, seemed very evident; she was much less dangerous any where than within the house—and as to what she might say without, which might be prejudicial to the character of Monimia, he determined to prevent the ill effects of that where it might be most prejudicial, by confessing, before he left the country, the very extent of his fault to his father, who already suspected so much of the truth.

However earnestly he wished to speak to Monimia, and however uneasy the idea of her suspense and dejection made him, he could find no opportunity of speaking to her during the morning, without hazard, which he had too recently suffered for, so immediately to incur again. Though Mrs. Lennard had artfully made Betty the victim, there was still reason to believe she was not without suspicions; and to irritate or increase them now, would be to preclude himself from the last pleasure he was likely to taste during the rest of his short residence at the

Hall—the pleasure of soothing his beloved Monimia, and, at the few interviews which they might yet obtain, reconciling her soft heart to the necessity of that separation that was so soon to happen.

He was summoned to dinner with Mrs. Rayland, who seemed pleased to find he was still at the Hall. Never did the old lady appear in such good humour with him, or so relaxed from the starch prudery of her usual character.—She gave way to her love of telling anecdotes and stories of her own family; and, pleased with the attention Orlando gave to her narratives, she hinted to him, though still with great ambiguity, that it would be his own fault if he was not one day or other the representative of a family so illustrious. She then spoke of his elder brother with anger and contempt, which Orlando generously tried to soften; of his mother with her usual coldness and dislike; and of his sisters as good, pretty-behaved girls—that is, I mean the two youngest. As to Miss Belle—she's a London lady already: I protest it hurts me to see young women so bold--but she has been cried up for a beauty. 'Tis vanity ruins all girls—no good is ever to be expected from them when once they get conceited notions into their heads of being handsome.

Orlando undertook the defence of his sister with more zeal than prudence; but Mrs. Rayland, though not to be convinced that Isabella was not a vain coquet, which indeed her unguarded gaiety gave the old lady very good reason to believe, was however in a humour to be pleased with all Orlando said. Her attachment to him had been long insensibly increasing; and though, like another Elizabeth, she could not bear openly to acknowledge her successor, she was as little proof as the royal ancient virgin, against the attractions of an amiable and handsome young man, whom she loved to consider

as the child of her bounty, and the creature of her smiles. Though determined to keep him dependent during her life, and even to send him out a soldier of fortune, she really meant to give him, at her death, the whole of her landed property; and the machinations of Pattenson, whose jealousy and avarice alike excited his hatred to Orlando, had hitherto had an effect so different from what he expected, that he found his politics entirely baffled, and that he was more likely to lose by farther attempts, his lady's regard, than to shake that she entertained for the young favourite.

A few years before, the very suspicion of an intrigue would have shut for ever the doors of Rayland Hall against the supposed delinquent; but now the attempts to impute such to Orlando had ended in nothing but the dismissing a servant—a circumstance proving at once, that though some credit was given to the accusation, no resentment towards him was entertained.

Mrs. Lennard, who had more sense and more art than Pattenson, and who had opportunities more closely to observe her lady, had long seen the progress of her affection for Orlando, and long ceased to counteract it.—She was not weak enough to imagine, as Pattenson did, that such great property as Mrs. Rayland possessed would be divided among her servants—but she knew that she should herself possess a very considerable legacy; and she thought it better that Orlando should inherit the bulk of the fortune, than either his father, who had always considered the old servants about her as his enemies, or any public charity—to some of which Mrs. Rayland had, in former fits of ill-humour, expressed an intention to leave the Rayland estate.

Mrs. Rayland had, in common with many old people, a strange aversion to speaking of her will,

or of what was to happen after her death; and far advanced as she was in life, she talked of future years as if she believed herself immortal. Mrs. Lennard had, however, once seen part of a will—with which, in respect to herself, she had great reason to be satisfied. She knew that Mrs. Rayland had lately made another, to which she was not a witness;—for such was the peculiarity of her lady in this respect, that she had sent for a lawyer and witnesses from London, that none of the neighbouring attornies, or even her confidential servants, might know its contents. Mrs. Lennard did not doubt but that Orlando was in this made heir of almost all the landed property; but she had no reason, from Mrs. Rayland's behaviour to her, to apprehend that this new will was at all prejudicial to herself.

Still, however, it was not her interest to encourage the affection which many circumstances gave her reason to believe Orlando entertained for her niece. She knew that, if the rashness of youth and passion should urge them to marry, it would not only ruin Orlando, who would then be a beggar; but that she should herself be accused of having promoted this fatal indiscretion, and lose her own advantages without obtaining any for her niece, whom she by no means wished to see independent of her, even if independence could thus have been obtained; and whom she treated with redoubled rigour, when she found reason to believe that Orlando felt for her that attachment which she had from their childhood foreseen and attempted to prevent.

The more Orlando gained on the favour of Mrs. Rayland, the more apprehensive Mrs. Lennard became of his affection for Monimia: she had however persuaded herself, that, with the precautions

she took, their clandestinely meeting or carrying on any correspondence was impracticable; and, satisfied that Monimia was confined to her room, her vigilance had now and then slumbered. But it awakened by the late reports that obtained in the house and about the country; reports which originated in the gossip of Orlando's nocturnal visitor; of his being missing at unusual hours, and from Betty's hints. When, therefore, Pattenson's jealousy was so far roused as to urge him to speak to his lady of a supposed intimacy between Orlando and this his faithless favourite, Mrs. Lennard let it make its impression ; and Betty's pertness, who had before agreed with Philip Somerive to take the first opportunity of going off to him, gave her a pretence immediately to discharge her. Mrs. Rayland, content to part with her favourite Orlando, because she thought it for his advantage to see something of the world in an honourable profession—and because she believed, if youth and idleness had concurred with the art of the girl with whom he was accused, to lead him into any improper connection, this was the best way to break it—determined on his departure with satisfaction, since the General assured her there was at present no probability of his leaving England.

Mrs. Lennard, who thought herself fortunate in having all the suspicions fall on Betty, kept as a profound secret those she entertained herself relative to Monimia, whom she resolved narrowly to watch till Orlando was gone. And Pattenson, glad that the young minion was to go, as he termed it, for a soldier, reconciled himself by that reflection to the failure of his original plan, which had been totally to ruin him with Mrs. Rayland. As to the loss of his fair one, he knew she would not remove far; and that resentment for his accusations would

not make her long relentless, while he had presents and money to offer her.

Such were, at this juncture, the politics of Rayland Hall.

CHAPTER XXV.

The house of West Wolverton too had its politicians, but none of them were so content with their past operations, or future prospects, as the venerable group last described.

Isabella, wild and coquettish as she was, could no longer affect to misunderstand the language with which General Tracy ventured to address her. For some time, however, she attempted to laugh it off; but at length resolved, by the counsel of Selina, to speak to her mother, and entreat that, if the General remained any longer their guest, she might not be so often left to hear professions so insulting, which the presence of her sisters did not always restrain. Mrs. Somerive, whose heart was half broken by the behaviour of Philip, and who saw, with inexpressible anguish, the ravage which the uneasiness arising from that source was hourly making on the constitution of her husband, had been fondly flattering herself, during the first weeks of the General's visit, that in him Mr. Somerive had found a sincere friend, and their children a powerful protector. The solicitude he expressed for Orlando, and the consideration with which he treated Philip, made her sanguinely believe that he would provide for one, and possibly reclaim the other. The sums which the latter had won from him at play—Mrs. Somerive, who knew nothing of their nightly gambling, supposed the

General had lent him; when her heart, overflowing with gratitude towards this generous friend, was suddenly struck with the intelligence Isabella gave her.

She at first fancied the vanity of Isabella might have given meaning to his expressions which they were never meant to convey; but, upon questioning her and Selina repeatedly, and from the observations she made the two following days, she was convinced that their representations of his behaviour were just. This cruel certainty she determined however to conceal from her husband, and to guard, by her own prudent watchfulness, against the artifices of the General without bringing on a rupture between him and Somerive that might be attended with consequences she sickened to think of.

The General, however, who paid her the most assiduous court, was soon sensible of a change in her manners; for she was incapable of the dissimulation which people of the world so successfully practise. From hence, and from the behaviour of Isabella, the General found that a longer stay would betray his insidious designs without contributing at all to their success, and he prepared to go; yet could not bear to relinquish for ever his hopes of gaining Isabella, with whom he was more in love than ever. He lingered, therefore, notwithstanding all the discouragement he received; and Somerive, who believed him the best and most sincere friend that ever man had, communicated to him all his affairs, and all his anxiety—by which the General perceived plainly, he was in such a state of mind as must hasten him to the grave; and he had learned that, impressed with ideas of his (the General's) friendship for all his family, he had made him executor, and trusted the welfare of his wife and daughters entirely to him and to Orlando.

Though Tracy therefore could neither give up his pursuit, nor succeed in it at present, he believed that the death of the father, the indigence to which the whole family would be reduced, and the absence of Orlando, would together make easy the project of obtaining Isabella for a mistress; and that patience and dissimulation alone were necessary to keep up his influence in the family, till they should be wholly in his power. He determined, therefore, to check himself; to make no more professions with which Isabella could be offended, but to express his contrition that he had said what she construed into want of respect; to hint remotely at honourable intentions; and thus, without engaging himself, or, as the fashionable phrase is, committing himself, to retain his influence over the whole family, as well as over the father; and to be assured that, whenever he chose to return, he should be received with pleasure. As to any suspicion that Isabella might think him of an age so disproportionate as to hear even his honourable offers with disdain and ridicule, it never occurred to the General; and he was pretty well assured, from the pecuniary circumstances of the family, that every other member of it would receive the remotest hint of an intended alliance with transport. The behaviour of Mrs. Somerive, on the evening of the tenant's ball, convinced him that Isabella had not merely threatened when she protested she would speak to her mother of his behaviour; and he found that though Mr. Somerive, whenever he talked of going, pressed his stay, it was time to depart.

The messenger, who was sent to the post town, on the following evening for letters, brought to General Tracy a large pacquet, arrived that day by the stage. On opening it, it was found to

contain the commission of an ensign for Orlando Somerive, executed in due form, from the War Office. This he hastened to offer, with a florid speech, to Mrs. Somerive; who had hardly recovered from the emotions with which the sight of it, and his peculiar and studied manner of presenting it, occasioned, when Orlando, anxious to know at what time his brother had got home, and how his mother and sisters were after the fatigue and uneasiness of the night before, arrived.

On his first entrance, he inquired eagerly after his brother.—Your brother! cried Mr. Somerive: he is not at home, Orlando, nor have we seen him since last night;—believing he was with you, and indeed supposing it possible that he was not well enough to leave your apartment, I made myself tolerably easy about him.—But when did he leave you? and where is he now?

Orlando replied, that he had left his bed about eleven o'clock; and then, to quiet the uneasiness which he saw this unexpected absence gave to them all, he added, But he is gone, I dare say, to Mr. Stockton's, where he has talked some time of intending to pass a day or two, and probably will not return home till to-morrow or next day.

Gone to Mr. Stockton's! exclaimed Mrs. Somerive.—What! without linen or change of clothes, though there is an house full of company?

Mr. Somerive, who saw how much his wife was alarmed and affected, endeavoured to speak lightly of the absence of her son—You know, my love, said he, that Philip does not pique himself on being a beau; and that the party at Mr. Stockton's are only men. He can probably borrow any linen he wants of his friends; and as he means to be at home so soon, and has no servant with him,

perhaps preferred doing so to the trouble of sending home for his own. Mrs. Somerive sighed, and cast a desponding look on her husband, who added, But come, my dear Bella, you and I have something to say to Orlando—we will go all together into my study for a few moments, and the girls will have tea ready against our return.—So saying, he took his wife's hand, and, Orlando following them, they left the room.

Mrs. Somerive was no sooner released from the restraint which the presence of the General imposed, than she threw herself into a chair, and fell into an agony of tears. Her husband gently chid her for emotion which he endeavoured to persuade her was much beyond the occasion; and, having succeeded in rendering her somewhat more calm, he told Orlando that his commission was arrived, and inquired whether any conversation had passed between him and Mrs. Rayland in consequence of what had been held between her and General Tracy the preceding evening? Orlando related it all as nearly as he could recollect it, save only that sentence which related to some fancied attachment; and Mr. Somerive received, with great pleasure, what appeared to him equal to a confirmation of the most sanguine hopes he had ever entertained on his son's behalf.—Mrs. Somerive however was less elated: she could not comprehend how Mrs. Rayland, if she had so much affection for Orlando, could not only bear to part with him but promote his departure; or how, if she meant to make him her heir, she could determine to send him out in the world a soldier of fortune. The representations of her husband, however, and the content which Orlando expressed, reconciled her by degrees to what she could not now recal. She gave him, but not without many tears, the com-

mission with which General Tracy had just presented her—but as she tried to give him her blessing with it, she relapsed into convulsive sorrow. Mr. Somerive found it would only distress her to return to the parlour; he therefore bade Orlando lead his mother to her own room, while he, returning to where his daughters were sitting with General Tracy, bade them go to her, and send their brother down to the parlour.

Orlando, on his entrance, addressed himself to Tracy, whom he thanked in the most graceful terms. The General answered his compliment with politeness, and the three gentlemen then began to discourse of the departure of Orlando for that party of his regiment that were in England, which Tracy told him could not properly be deferred longer than till the following week. He advised therefore that Orlando should set out for London on the following Monday—when, said he, as I shall go thither myself, I can have the pleasure of giving you a place in my post-chaise.

Mr. Somerive, while he expressed regret that the General was to leave him so soon (though his stay had been prolonged to almost six weeks,) yet embraced this offer with avidity. He foresaw, that in the equipment of Orlando, of which Mrs. Rayland was, he understood, to defray the expense, the directions of such a friend could not fail of being extremely useful, and that his instructions might in a thousand more material instances be of advantage to him.—It was therefore settled among them, that, on the evening of the following Sunday, Orlando should take leave of his ancient benefactress, and repair to his father's house, to be ready to attend General Tracy to town the next morning.

Orlando was now impatient to return to the Hall

—He hoped to have a few moments' conversation with Monimia that evening; alas! only one more was to intervene before his departure: and the painful task of reconciling her to his going so soon and of taking a long—long leave, seemed to require an age!—His restlessness became so evident that his father noticed it—You will stay here to-night, Orlando? said he. No, Sir, answered his son; I wish with your leave to return to the Hall.—Mrs. Rayland often asks for me at breakfast, and you will allow that just at this period I should not seem in the slightest degree to neglect her.—You are right in returning, said Mr. Somerive, fixing his eyes steadily on those of his son, if that is your *only* motive.—Orlando, not able to bear the penetrating looks of his father, turned away, and said hastily—Besides, Sir, I wish to inquire after my brother—for, however I affected before my mother to believe he was at Stockton's, I assure you I do not know he is there, nor have I any guess about him but what makes me uneasy.—Go, then, replied his father with a deep sigh—but remember, Orlando, that from *you* I expect sincerity.—And you shall not be disappointed, Sir, answered Orlando, warmly; before I take my leave of you, and ask your last blessing, my heart shall be laid open to you, which I would rather pierce with my own hand than suffer it to harbour ingratitude or dissimulation towards so good a father.—Tears were in the eyes of the father and the son.—Orlando! said Somerive in a faltering voice, go to your mother before you leave the house, and give her all the comfort you can—the absence of your brother overwhelms her with fear and distress; and before we see you to-morrow, my son——for I suppose we shall see you ....

Certainly, Sir! at any time you name.

Make that convenient to yourself, Orlando, only, before we do see you, endeavour to find your brother, and persuade him to return, or at least bring us some news of him'

Orlando promised he would; and then went to his mother, who had by this time reasoned herself into a more calm state of mind. Having taken leave of her and his sisters for the night, he set out on foot to return to the Hall.

The night was overcast and gloomy; chill and hollow the wind whistled among the leafless trees, or groaned amid the thick firs in the dark and silent wood;—the water-falls murmured hollow in the blast, and only the owl's cry broke those dull and melancholy sounds, which seemed to say—Orlando, you will revisit these scenes no more! He endeavoured to reason himself out of these comfortless presages. He tried to figure to himself the happier days, that never seemed so likely as now to be his, and at no very remote period. Though Mrs. Rayland was, from peculiarity of temper, averse to naming her successor, she was not at all likely to hold out hopes she never meant to realize, and certainly she never gave any so strong as what her conversation of that morning had offered. He endeavoured therefore to persuade himself, that the time was not very far distant when, if he was not actually the possessor of Rayland Hall, he should at least have such a competency as should enable him to settle in this his native country with his beloved Monimia. He tried to animate his drooping spirits with the idea that, in the profession into which he was now entering, he might find the means of accelerating this happy period: But then the frightful interval that must intervene occurred to him, with all the possibilities that might happen in it; and the destitute state of Monimia, the ill health

of his father (which, though he did not complain, was visible to every body), the unhappy misconduct of his brother, threatening the ruin and dispersion of his family, and the possibility that Mrs. Rayland might disappoint the expectations she had raised, all combined to sink and depress him, and again to lend to the well-known paths he was traversing, horrors not their own, while every object repeated—Orlando will revisit these scenes no more!

By the time he reached that part of the park from whence the house was visible at a distance, it was quite dark, and, had he not almost instinctively known his way, he could not have discerned it—for no light glimmered from the Gothic windows of the Hall, not even in that part of the house inhabited by the servants; and Orlando imagined that most of them, fatigued the night before, were gone earlier than usual to bed. He fixed his eyes earnestly on Monimia's turret:—all was dark; and he doubted whether her aunt had not removed her, in consequence of the suspicions that originated in the circumstances of the preceding evening. This apprehension made his spirits sink still more heavily; and when he was within an hundred yards of the house he stopped, and gazed mournfully on the place, which perhaps no longer contained the object of his affection.

There is hardly a sensation more painful than the blank that strikes on the heart, when, instead of the light we expect streaming from some beloved spot where our affections are fondly fixed, all is silent and dark.—Ah! how often in life we feel this yet stronger, when the friend on whom we rely becomes suddenly cold and repulsive; Orlando, who was passionately fond of poetry, recollected the

simply descriptive stanza in the ballad of Hardyknute:

"Theirs nae licht in my lady's bowir,
"Theirs nae licht in the hall;
"Nae blink shynes round my fairly fair—"

And, like the dismayed hero of the song,

"Black feir he felt, but what to fear
"He wist not zit with dreid."

Quiet as every thing appeared round the house, he knew it was earlier than the hour when Mrs. Lennard usually locked the door of Monimia's apartment for the night; it *was* possible that she might have detained her niece in her own room longer than was her general custom.

In hopes that he might see the light at length glimmer through the casement, which would assure him Monimia was there, he determined to watch for it a little longer, where he might not be himself observed.

It was indeed so very dark that he was sure it was impossible for any one to discern him from the house, or at least to distinguish his figure from that of the deer who were feeding around him. He sat down therefore on the turf; but the dreary moments passed, and still no light appeared—though Orlando was sure that if a light was in the room he must see it, because of the want of shutters towards the upper part of this long window. A thousand conjectures disturbed him, and grew, as time wore away, more and more painful. Perhaps Monimia was indisposed, and had gone early to bed; perhaps the alarms she had suffered the preceding evening, and uneasiness at his not having seen her, might have overcome her tender spirits, and, together with the harsh reproaches of her aunt, have rendered her really ill. His warm and rapid ima-

gination now represented her sinking under anguish of mind which she dared not communicate—and tenderly reproaching him for being the cause of all her sufferings. It was he who had disturbed the innocent serenity of her bosom—and persuaded her to grant him interviews with which she continually reproached herself. Or, if this was not the case, if her lovely frame was not overwhelmed by sickness arising from sorrow, perhaps she was more strictly confined in some part of the house where it would be impossible for him to see her; from whence it would be equally impossible for her to escape to him, to indulge him in the last sad pleasure of a parting interview. This last conjecture appeared highly probable, from what Mrs. Lennard had said to him in the morning; and he found it too intolerable, even while it was but conjecture, to be supported with patience. The great clock now struck eleven: every vibration seemed to fall on his heart. —He traversed yet a little longer the turf immediately under the windows of the turret; and at length saw a light from the servants' hall, whither he went, hoping, yet fearing, to gain some intelligence which he dreaded to ask. He entered, however; but found only Pattenson there, who was putting out the fire. It was in vain Orlando addressed him with great civility. The sulky old butler, who imputed to him the alacrity with which his favourite nymph had left the house, looked at him with a countenance cloudy and indignant, and deigned not even to give him the candle he asked for.—There are candles, if you want them! was all he could obtain from him. He inquired if Mrs. Rayland was gone to her room? if he could speak to Mrs. Lennard? To which Pattenson, turning sullenly away, replied, The women's side of the house has been shut up these two hours—you'll hardly get

any admittance to make your flummering speeches to any on 'em to-night.—Orlando, already irritated by vexation, was so much provoked at this insolence, that he was tempted to knock down the consequential Mr. Pattenson; but he fortunately recollected that he was an old man, and a servant, and that it was unworthy of him to strike such a person, whatever might be the provocation. He could not however help expressing his anger for this insult, in terms stronger than he usually allowed himself; and then; half frantic, went to his own room, merely because he knew not what to do to obtain some intelligence of Monimia.

After a moment's consideration, he went through the chapel, and to the lower room of the turret. If Mrs. Lennard had discovered the door of communication, he thought he should perceive it by some means or other—but all below was as he left it;—he then mounted the stairs, and listened at the door behind Monimia's bed, but all was profoundly silent. He ventured to tap softly at the door, their usual signal, which Monimia never failed, when she was alone, to answer instantly; but now no answer was returned. He spoke—but no soft voice, in tremulous whispers, replied. Again he rapped, and spoke louder; but still all was dead silence around him.—Yet he waited a moment or two—lost in distracting conjectures—Monima was certainly not in her room—what then was become of her, or whither was she gone? He felt as if he should never see her more, though it was impossible to suppose she was removed from the house. At length he returned to his own apartment again more wretched than he left it;—and not seeing any probability of discovering that night what could thus have robbed him of the sight of Monimia, he went to his bed—but not to sleep, though he had

suffered so many hours of mental and bodily fatigue. He watched the earliest dawn of light; and as soon as he could discern the objects about the park, he dressed himself and went out—walking slowly round the house, and looking up at all the windows, in hopes that if Monimia was as restless as he was, she might appear at that of the room she was confined in, in the expectation of seeing him. But he made his melancholy tour repeatedly in vain. He then returned to his own room, furnished himself with materials for shooting, and went into the kitchen under pretence of drying some powder; that, while he watched it carefully himself, he might have an excuse of staying to talk a little with the cook. This woman, whose admiration of Orlando's beauty had made her much his friend, was willing enough to gossip with him, and talked much of Betty's being so suddenly discharged, declaimed against her, and hinted that it was pity such a young 'squire should undervalue himself so as to take a liking to such a tawdry trollop.—Orlando, who cared very little what was thought of him in regard to Betty, rather humoured than denied the oblique charge; but endeavouring to lead the conversation towards Mrs. Lennard, whom she called a covetous cross old frump; and as for that, added the woman, she uses that sweet child, her niece as they call her, no better than a dog.

Why, how does she use her? cried Orlando, faltering and in a hurried voice: What! has she lately done any thing?

Not as I knows on; but I knows she is always rating her, so as the poor young thing have no peace of her life—and if she offer for to come to speak to any of us sarvants, there's a rare to do! Fine airs truly for mother Lennard to give herself—as if her niece was a bit better than we be! If she's so proud

that she won't let the girl speak to no sarvants, I think she mid as well not make her work like one—which I'm sure she does, and shuts her up like as a felon in a jail.

Where, said Orlando, does she shut her up?

Why, in her own room, don't she? From morning to night, and from one year's end to another, she's lock'd up in that there place, that's just for all the world like a belfry.

And is she there now? cried Orlando eagerly.

Yes, replied the cook, I suppose so—I think, 'squire, instead of running after such a drab as Bet, you'd better help miss out of her cage.

This was said merely at random; but Orlando's confusion was evident. He found that whatever removal Mrs. Lennard had projected and executed for her niece, she had not communicated her intentions, or the motives of them, to this servant, and probably not to any of the others. His distracting suspense was now almost insupportable. He had promised his father to inquire after Philip; he was under the necessity of seeing Mrs. Rayland; and must pass some part of the day with his family. Thus circumstanced, it was impossible, unless he gained some immediate intelligence of Monimia that he could acquaint her with the decision made in the course of the preceding day in regard to his departure for London—impossible to contrive a meeting, on which his hopes had so long dwelt, when he might reconcile her to his going, and offer her those vows of everlasting attachment which he meant most religiously to keep. It now occurred to him, that he would take his gun, and fire it on that side of the house that was next Mrs. Lennard's apartment, in hopes that Monimia might come to the window for the chance of seeing if it was he who fired. Retiring therefore hastily from the

kitchen, without seeming to attend to the raillery of the servant with whom he had been talking, he said there was a hawk about the park, which he had seen early that morning strike a young hare; and that he would endeavour to shoot it. He went then almost under the windows of Mrs. Lennard's room, and fired repeatedly, without obtaining what he wished for. At length he saw through the casement the figure of Monimia. He clasped his hands together, as if to entreat her to stay, and to express the anguish he laboured under. She looked fearfully behind her, as if dreading her aunt, and then beckoned to him to approach. He flew under the window—she opened the casement, and said, while fear made her voice almost inarticulate, my aunt suspects us, and has removed me into her closet—Come after it is dark under the window, and I will tell you farther.

Gracious Heaven! exclaimed Orlando, I go from hence on Monday, and we shall meet then no more.

I dare not stay, cried the trembling Monimia—Pray, come as soon as it is dark!

To what purpose, exclaimed Orlando, if I am only to see you thus? By Heaven I shall lose my senses!

Oh! if you knew, said Monimia, what I have suffered, you would not terrify me now—For mercy's sake go! She then shut the window; and Orlando not caring, and hardly knowing what he did, went again round the house—half tempted to turn the mouth of his gun against himself. The wildness and distraction of his countenance struck one of the under keepers, who, believing he was really in pursuit of some bird of prey, came to offer his assistance. The impatience however of Orlando's answers, so unlike his general obliging manners, convinced the fellow that the report he had heard in the family was true, and that Orlando was in despair

because handsome Betty, as she was called among the servants, had left the family on his account. The young man loved Orlando, as did indeed every creature who approached him ; and he now endeavoured to console him—If I was you, Sir, said he as he walked after him, I would not take this to heart so much. What ! cried Orlando peevishly, take what to heart? Why about this young woman, answered the keeper : to be sure you be parted, but perhaps all's for the best ; who knows ?

Orlando, whose head and heart were full of Monimia, imagined that it was of her the man spoke ; and turning hastily to him, he said in an eager, yet angry way—

What is it you mean, Jacob, and what is for the best ?

Nay, Sir, answered Jacob, I only say, that worse might have come of it ; for to my knowledge there have been a deal said, and the talk of the country sure enough it have been. There was t'other night at the Three Horse Shoes—there was three or four of us of the Hall, and John Dutton and Richard Williams at Mill, and Stokes and Smith and some more —and so they were speaking of this here young body ; and Stokes, who is a free spoken man, he said, says he—What scoundrel, exclaimed Orlando enraged and thrown wholly off his guard, what infamous lying scoundrel shall dare to traduce her? I will tear the soul out of any rascal, who shall breathe even a suspicion against Monimia.

Monimia, Sir ! cried the man, who was thunderstruck by the violence of Orlando, Lord, I was speaking of Betty—she as went away this morning because of your keeping company with her—I'm sure, Sir, I never thought no harm of Miss Monimmy, nor scarce ever see her twice in my life.

Orlando now repented him of his rashness. Well,

well, said he—I believe you, Jacob—I'm sure you would not say or think any harm of an innocent young lady, especially, Jacob, if you thought it would displease me, and do me a great deal of harm. Jacob now most earnestly protested not only his unwillingness to offend, but his desire to oblige his honour.——Orlando, whose spirits were yet in such a tumult, that he could not arrange the ideas that crowded on his mind, now bade Jacob follow him into his study. Unwilling as he had always been to put Monimia into the power of servants, he knew that something decisive must be hazarded, or that he must resign all hopes of seeing her before he went: he was the less scrupulous, as he was so soon to go, and he hoped he could make it this young man's interest to be faithful to him. It occurred to him, that even when he was gone, some person must be in his confidence, who would receive, and deliver to Monimia, the letters which he knew he dared not direct to her at the Hall. This mistake, therefore, which had for a moment vexed and confused him, he now thought a fortunate circumstance, and without farther reflection, disclosed to this young man his long affection for Monimia; the difficulties he was in at the present moment about seeing her; and his wish to find some means of corresponding with her hereafter. Jacob entered into his situation with an appearance of intelligence and interest with which Orlando was well satisfied. They agreed upon a plan for the evening—by which Orlando hoped to procure an interview with Monimia, instead of merely seeing her at the window; and elated with his hope, he forgot the hazard and impropriety of the means he had used to obtain it.

Having however talked over and settled every thing with his new confident, he went to pay his compliments to Mrs. Rayland, to whom he report-

ed the arrival of his commission, and whom he found in the same disposition as when he last saw her— Then having obtained her leave to dine at his father's, he set out in pursuit of his brother, in hopes of carrying some intelligence to his family that might dissipate their uneasiness, of which his own did not render him unmindful. He rode therefore to Mr. Stockton's, where he learned from the servants, that Mr. Philip Somerive had been there about one o'clock; that he had borrowed linen of their master, with whom he stayed till after a late dinner, and then had set out in a post-chaise, as he said, for London. This was information but little likely to quiet the uneasiness of his father and his family—with a heavy heart, therefore, Orlando proceeded to give it. Mr. Somerive received it with a deep sigh, but without any comment; his wife with tears; while the General, from whom they concealed nothing, endeavoured to console them by speaking light of it. I am persuaded, said he, my good friends, that your extreme solicitude and anxiety for your children often carry you beyond the line that dispassionate reason would mark for your conduct towards them.—Then addressing himself in his insinuating way to Mrs. Somerive he added—For example, now, my dear good friend —you no sooner hear that it is right for you to part with your younger son for the army, than you imagine that he will be killed. No sooner is your elder missing upon one of those little excursions, which a young man of high spirit, without any present employment, very naturally indulges himself in, than you figure to yourself I know not what evil consequence. Believe me, Orlando will not sleep in the bed of honour, nor our more eccentric Philip be devoured by the Philistines. Make yourselves easy, therefore, I beg of you. Your

son is gone to London for four or five days perhaps —what then?—Here is your other son going with me—and we will make it our business to see Philip, if you will but make yourselves easy—and I dare say you will have him with you again, before you eat your Christmas dinner, safe and sound.

Mr. Somerive, who saw from sad experience the departure of Philip in a very different light, would not however dwell longer on a subject so affecting and so useless. It was of no avail to discuss now the reasons he had to dread the conduct of his eldest son, in this unexpected absence; nor did he wonder, for he had often seen it in others, at the composure with which General Tracy argued against the indulgence of uneasiness, which he himself could never feel; and he repeated to himself, as he longed to say to his friend, that it is easy to recommend patience with an untouched or insensible heart, patience in evils, that either can never reach the preacher, or which he is incapable of feeling. —Some lines of Shakspeare, applicable to the General's remonstrance, and the uneasy state of his thoughts, occurred to him as he walked into the garden to conceal those thoughts from his wife.

" No, no! 'tis all men's office to speak patience
" To those that wring under a load of sorrow;
" But no man's virtue or sufficiency
" To be so moral, when he shall endure
" The like himself. Theretore give me no comfort."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Orlando could not, though he attempted it, conceal the anguish of his heart during the day; for though he had arranged with his new confident the

means of seeing Monimia, it was far from certain these plans would succeed; or, could he be content with the means which he had used, however desirable the end—Monimia, who while she yielded to his earnest entreaties, had always felt, from the natural rectitude of her understanding, the impropriety of their clandestine correspondence, would, he feared, be more than ever sensible of her indiscretion, when she found that a servant was entrusted with it—and on thinking over what had passed between him and the under keeper, he found more reason to entertain a good opinion of his acuteness than of his integrity.—When to these reflections were added the certainty of his immediate departure, and the uncertainty of his return; the mournful looks of his mother, who could not behold him without tears; the deep, but more silent sorrow marked on the countenance of his father, and the pensive expression of regret on those of his sisters; he could with difficulty go through the forms of a melancholy dinner, at which the General in vain attempted to call off the attention of his hosts to subjects of common conversation, and to divert them from private misery by those public topics which then interested none of them. The expulsion of the Americans from the province of Canada, which had happened the preceding August; and the victory gained by the British fleet near Crown Point against a small number of their gondolas and galleys, in the course of the following October, successes of which exaggerated official accounts were just received, were matters whereon the General triumphantly descanted, and on which he obtained more attention from his audience, because he asserted very positively that, in consequence of these amazing advantages, the whole continent of America would submit, and the troops of course return as soon as

they had chastised the insolent colonists sufficiently for their rebellion.—Orlando then, he assured his family, was not at all likely to join his regiment, which would almost immediately be ordered home; but would be the safe soldier of peace, and perhaps return to them in a few weeks, no otherwise altered than by his military air and a cockade. The only smile that was seen the whole day on the faces of any of the family was visible on that of Mrs. Somerive, on the General's description of an American flight, though none had a more tender heart, or a more liberal mind: but having heard only one side of the question, and having no time or inclination to investigate political matters, she now believed that the Americans were a set of rebellious exiles, who refused, on false pretences, "the tribute to Cæsar," which she had been taught by scriptural authority ought to be paid. Thus considering them, she rejoiced in their defeat, and was insensible of their misery; though, had not the new profession of Orlando called forth her fears for him, she would probably never have thought upon the subject at all —a subject with which, at that time, men not in parliament and their families supposed they had nothing to do. They saw not the impossibility of enforcing in another country the very imposts to which, unrepresented, they would not themselves have submitted. Elate with national pride, they had learned by the successes of the preceding war to look with contempt on the inhabitants of every other part of the globe; and even on their colonists, men of their own country—little imagining that, from their spirited resistance,

"The child would rue that was unborn
"The *taxing* of that day."

At length the hour arrived when Orlando obtain-

ed permission to return to the Hall: he told his father, that as he meant to take leave of Mrs. Rayland that night, in order to pass the greater part of Sunday with his family, it was necessary for him to pay her this last compliment. Mr. Somerive acceded to the necessity he urged; but, at parting from him, fixed his eyes on those of his son, with a look which expressed solicitude, sorrow, and pity. It questioned his sincerity, and yet seemed not to reproach him. Orlando could not bear it: he hurried away, and rode as speedily as he could to the Hall; where he sent up for leave to wait on Mrs. Rayland to tea, and then went in search of Jacob, who easily found a pretence for attending him in his study. Orlando with a palpitating heart questioned him: Have you, cried he, discovered any means by which I can obtain access to Monimia, or get her down stairs, without the knowledge of Mrs. Lennard?

Faith, Sir, answered the man, 'tis no easy task as your honour have set me, I can tell you—However, I've contrived to speak to Miss —

Have you? cried Orlando eagerly: there's an excellent fellow. And what does she say?

Aye, Sir, replied Jacob, that's the thing. She was in a sad twitter when she know'd you had told me, and said it was impossible to do what you desired—for the room where she sleeps is a closet within Madam Lennard's, hardly big enough to hold a bed: but it is an impossible thing to get out of a night after Madam's in bed, by reason that her room doors are locked; and for the window, it is barred up with a long iron bar; so that if Miss had courage to get down a ladder, she could not get out—or if she did, she could never get back again. Her aunt, she says, finds her being there vastly inconvenient; and, as soon as you are gone, reckons to send her back to her own room.

I shall be driven out of my senses, exclaimed Orlando, as he traversed the room : if I cannot see her before I go, I shall be distracted—How did you obtain admittance to her? Cannot I speak to her by the same means?—Why hardly; for you must know that I was forced to get one of the maids to help me. The new house-maid that Madam have hired this morning upon trial, is an old acquaintance of mine; I gave her an item of the matter, and so she contrived to take me up to mend the window-shutter, which she had broke on purpose; and bid me I should take a hammer and nails, and make a clatter if Madam Lennard came. I took care to make my job long enough; and when the old house-keeper ax'd me what I was a doing, I had an excuse you know pat, and it passed off very well; and not only so, but she said to me, says she —When you have done that job, Jacob, I wish you would just look at the wainscot under the window and under them there drawers of mine; for it's as rotten as touchwood, and the rats are for ever coming in, says she; and says she, I never saw the like of this old house—it will tumble about our ears, I reckon, one day or 'nother, and yet my lady is always repairing it, says she; but the wainscoting of this here end of the wing, says she, has been up above an hundred years; and we may patch it, and patch it, and yet be never the nearer: but, for my part, I suppose it will last my time, says she.

Orlando no sooner heard that another person, the new house-maid, had been incautiously admitted to participate a secret which he had hitherto so anxiously guarded, than his vexation conquered the pleasure he had for a moment indulged, in learning that it was possible for another, and therefore for him to see Monimia. To the latter part of the game-keeper's oration he could not attend, occupied

with the idea of the new uneasiness this circumstance must give to Monimia; and agitated by innumerable fears and anxieties, he remained a moment silent after his companion had ceased to speak, and then said—She told you, I think, that after I was gone, her aunt would suffer her to return to her former apartment?

Yes, that was what she said.

Well, then, I will go. Indeed I am going by day-break to-morrow. Nay, I am going from this house to-night; and therefore I shall take leave of Mrs. Rayland this evening. He paused a moment, and then added, I suppose it is possible to convey a letter to Monimia, though I despair of seeing her?

O Lord! yes, Sir, that you may do for certain; for I told her, that if she would let down a letter for you by a string at seven o'clock, I would be there to take it; and you might send her one back the same way.

What is it o'clock now? cried Orlando.

Almost six, sir.

It is time then for me to go to my appointment with Mrs. Rayland, whose tea I am afraid is ready. Do you be punctual to seven o'clock; and, if I can escape, I will be with you at the window. But I beseech you, Jacob, to remember, that all the obligation I shall owe you on this occasion will be cancelled, if you are not secret. I wish you had not mentioned this matter to any other person, especially to a woman—You know they are not to be trusted.

Aye! that I know well enough; they'll cackle, I know they will, if life and death depended upon it: but, Lord! Sir, how a-name of fortune was I to get at Miss, unless I had done so? and I do believe Nanny is as trusty as most.

It was equally useless to argue on the necessity of the measure, or the discretion of Nanny. The die was cast; and to meet Monimia safely after so much hazard had been incurred, was all that it would now answer any purpose to think of. Orlando, during his short conference with his own thoughts, had determined to take that night his last leave of Mrs. Rayland, and to say to her before Mrs. Lennard, that he was to set out the next morning early, with General Tracy, for London. He hoped, by thus acting, to persuade the aunt of Monimia that she might safely send her back to her former apartment; and that by making an appointment with her for Sunday, when he would by the people at the Hall be believed on his way to London, he should enjoy without interruption the melancholy pleasure of bidding her adieu, and settling the safest method for their future correspondence.

For this purpose he wrote to her; and sealing the letter, he put it into his pocket and repaired to Mrs. Rayland; who, understanding he was come to take his leave, received him with great solemnity, yet not with less kindness than usual.

Her conversation consisted chiefly of good advice. She declaimed against the vitiated state of modern manners, and related how much better things were in her time. She warned him to beware of the gamesters and bad women; who, she said, were the ruin of all young people; and gave him, though obliquely, to understand, that his future favour with her depended on his behaviour in this his first appearance in life.

With her the age of chivalry did not seem to be passed; for she appeared to consider Orlando as a damoisell, now about to make his first essay in arms. Indeed, while she talked much of modern immorality and dissipation, she knew very little of

modern manners, seldom seeing any of those people who are what is called people of the world; and forming her ideas of what was passing in it, only from newspapers and the Lady's Magazine, or some such publication, which excited only wonder and disgust—while her recollection came to her relief, and carried her back to those days she herself remembered—and with still greater pleasure to the relations her father had given of what passed in his. The freedom of modern life suited so ill with the solemnity of respect that was shewn towards her in her youth, that she shrunk from the uneasiness it gave her, and made around her a world of her own: of which when Orlando became an inhabitant, all that regarded him was assimilated to her own antediluvian notions.

In answer to her long and sage lecture, Orlando assured her, and with great sincerity, that he had no wishes that were not centered in the spot and neighbourhood he was about to leave: that, new as he was to the world, he yet believed it would offer him no objects that could a moment detach his affections from his family and his friends. There was so much earnestness, and something so impressive in the manner of his saying this, as not only enforced belief, but sensibly affected Mrs. Rayland. She almost repented that she had ever consented to his going; but to detain him now without acknowledging him as her heir (which she had determined never to do), was not to be thought of; and General Tracy had succeeded in convincing her, not only that it was a justice due to her young relation to give him an opportunity of seeing more of mankind; but that, as he would not quit England, he would enjoy all the advantages of an honourable profession, without losing the advantage of her protection. Without giving implicit credit to

the tales by which Pattenson attempted to prejudice him in her favour, she thought enough of them to let them influence in some degree her determination; and she believed that, if he had formed any improper attachment, nothing was so likely to break it as sending him from the country, and into scenes of life which would, she supposed, occupy his mind without injuring his morals.

It seemed as if towards the close of her life Mrs. Rayland had acquired, instead of losing, her sensibility; for she, who had hardly ever loved any body, now found that she could not without pain part from Orlando. She felt her pride and pleasure equally interested in exerting towards him that generosity, which from the rest of his family she had withheld; and the apparent dejection of his spirits, the reluctance with which he left the Hall, made him appear to her more worthy than ever of her favour. When therefore she had exhausted every topic of advice she could think of, and received from the manly simplicity of his answers, all the assurances that words could give of his gratefully receiving it, she presented him with a bank-note of two hundred and fifty pounds; which she told him was for the purpose of purchasing what he would have occasion for on his first entrance into the army. She had, however, so little idea of modern expenses, that she really considered this as a very great sum, and such as it was an amazing effort of generosity in her to part with: yet, while she made this exertion, her kindness towards him was so far from being exhausted, that she told him he should find her always his banker, so long as he continued to give her reason to think of him as she thought now.

Orlando kissed the hand of his ancient benefactress; but the tears were in his eyes, and he

was unable to speak. He tried, however, to thank her for this last, and for all her former favours to him: but the words were inarticulate; and the old lady herself, "albeit unused to the melting mood," was now so much affected, that she could only faintly utter the blessing she gave him. You had better not say any more, Sir, said Mrs. Lennard, who seemed disposed to weep too—much better not, for indeed it will make my lady quite out of spirits. Orlando, very willing to shorten such a scene, turned to Mrs. Lennard, towards whom in a few hurried words he expressed his thanks for her past kindness, and his wishes for her health and happiness; and then hastened away, his heart oppressed by the scene that had passed, yet beating tumultuously with the thoughts of that which was to come.

He hardly dared, however, give himself time to think. He had told Mrs. Rayland a falsehood, for which his ingenuous heart already smote him. He was about to act in direct violation of all he had promised and all she expected of him. He knew that, were he detected lingering about the house, after what he had just said of his intentions of leaving it immediately, he should lose for ever all the advantage of that favour which Mrs. Rayland now so openly avowed for him; and that, if his attachment to Monimia were known, it would excite more anger and resentment than almost any of the errors against which she had been warning him. But all these considerations, strongly as they ought to have operated against any other indiscreet indulgence, were powerless when put in competition with his tender affection for Monimia; and to leave her without being able to speak to her and console her, was what he could not for a moment have endured to think of, if poverty, disgrace, and exile

from every other human being had been the alternatives.

On entering his room, he found it wanted only a few moments of seven. He glided therefore round the house, and found his punctual confident already waiting for the signal. We need not both be here, said Orlando: Go, Jacob, and wait for me in my room: I have asked leave for you to go with me to-night to carry a portmanteau to West Wolverton. Jacob obeyed: and Orlando, almost breathless with fear lest he should be disappointed in this his forlorn hope, waited under the window.

The casement at length softly opened, and Monimia appeared at it. He spoke to her, and bade her let down the string for a letter, on the success of which, said he, more than my life depends.—Read it then, Monimia, read it quickly, and give me an answer.

The trembling girl, whose hurry of spirits alone supported her, now hastened away with the letter; and, in an instant, threw down a piece of paper on which she had written with a pencil—If I am suffered to go back to my own room to-night, I will be ready on the usual signal; but, if I am not, I cannot write. If I am not, farewell, Orlando—farewell for ever; for I shall be too wretched to make it possible for me to live. Remember, dear Orlando, your poor friend! and may you be very happy, whatever becomes of me! Go, now, for heaven's sake!—I am sure my aunt will be here in a few moments: and all depends upon her believing you gone.

As it was too dark for Orlando to discern these words, he was compelled to go back to his own room to read them. The doubt they left upon his mind distracted him; but it was a doubt which, if he attempted to remove it, would become a cer-

tainty that would destroy this faint ray of hope. He went back, however, to the window, in hopes that he might yet speak one word to Monimia; but he saw that there was now another candle in the room; and, retiring a little farther so as to be able to see more of it, he distinctly saw Mrs. Lennard walking in the room, and apparently busied in the usual occupations to which she dedicated Saturday nights. To stay, therefore, was not only useless but dangerous; and he thought it better to make a great bustle in going, that all the inhabitants of the Hall might be apprised of his absence. He sent Jacob into the kitchen to give some farther orders about forwarding his trunks and baggage to the next market-town, as they were to be sent to London by the waggon; and then, mournfully and reluctantly prepared to leave the room where he had passed so many happy hours—the room where his mind first tasted the charms of literature, and his heart of love. It was indeed possible that he might once more revisit it, once more that evening with Monimia; but it was also possible, perhaps most probable, that he might not see her again.

A thousand painful reflections presented themselves. He left her exposed to numberless inconveniencies; and his late rashness had, perhaps, added to them by putting her into the power of servants. Yet he might be denied an opportunity to put her upon her guard against any of the circumstances he foresaw, or even to settle how she might receive his letters.

He traversed the library, yielding to these tormenting thoughts; and, by the light of the solitary candle he had set down in the window seat, every thing appeared gloomy and terrific. Every object and every sound seemed to repeat the sentence that constantly occurred to him—Orlando will revisit

this house no more! It is difficult to say how long he would have indulged this mournful reverie (notwithstanding his resolution just before taken to quit the house with as much noise as possible), if he had not been alarmed by the sound of a female step in the adjoining parlour. He started. It was perhaps Monimia! He flew to the door; and there, with too evident marks of disappointment in his countenance, he discovered it to be Mrs. Lennard herself, who, with a candle in her hand, and much perpendicular dignity in her air, stalked into the study—I am glad, Mr. Orlando, you are not yet gone, for I have a message from my lady. Orlando would have faced a cannon with less trepidation than he waited for this message, which his conscience told him might relate to Monimia. It proved, however, to be only that he would give to Lennard the keys of the rooms; and that she might see the window safe and barred. To this, though it disappointed him wholly of his hopes of meeting Monimia there, it was impossible to object. The cautious housekeeper, therefore, barricaded every avenue to this apartment, without forgetting the door that led to the chapel; and then formally inquiring if Orlando had taken out every thing he wished to have, to which he answered Yes (as his boxes had been moved the preceding day), she said she would follow him; and he left the room with an additional pang, while Mrs. Lennard locked the door and marched solemnly after him.

Towards the middle of the great parlour, through which they were passing, he stopped, and said in a voice that betrayed his emotion—You will be so good, dear madam, to assure Mrs. Rayland of my grateful respects, and to accept yourself a repetition of my good wishes.

Thank you, Sir, answered the lady, I am sure I

wish you very well: but now, Mr. Orlando, since we part friends—

I hope we *always* were friends, Madam, said Orlando, attempting to smile, and turn the discourse, which he feared tended to the subject he most dreaded.

I hope so too, Sir; but I must say, that I am afraid in regard to that girl, my niece, there has been some wrong doings. It was not right in you, Mr. Orlando, I must say, to hold a secret correspondence with her, which I am very sure you did by means of that sad slut Betty, who latterly has been always giving me hints of it: but I, who did not think Monimia so cunning and artful, did not understand them; and, even to this day, I cannot imagine how you contrived so often to talk to her out of the window, without being seen or heard. However, it's all over now, I hope! and I am willing to let it be forgot as a childish frolic. When you return here, Sir, you will by that time have seen too much of the world to think about such a chit as Monimia—if, indeed, she should happen to be here so long.

Orlando, divided between his joy to find that the real avenue by which they had conversed was unknown, and the pain the last hint gave him, knew not what to reply; but, confused and hesitating, he stammered out a sentence which Mrs. Lennard did not give him time to finish—Come, come, Mr. Orlando, said she, I know you are above any false representations: besides, I assure you, you cannot take an old bird with chaff—However, as I said before, there is an end of the matter—I shall take care of young madam here; and I dare say you will find plenty of ladies where you are going, better worth looking after.

Orlando, utterly unable to answer this raillery, now wished her once more health and happiness;

and said (again vainly attempting to appear unconcerned)—I really do not love to contradict ladies, my dear Mrs. Lennard! so you must have your own way, however your suspicions may wrong me. He then hastened away to mount his horse, with which Jacob waited for him at the door of the servants' hall that opened towards the stables:—but as he passed through, he found all the servants assembled at it to take leave of him. Even Pattenson was there; but by the expression of his air and manner, with very different sentiments from the rest—for they all testified their concern; while the old butler, with a contemptuous sneer on his countenance, appeared to be delighted by his departure.

At once flattered and pained by the good wishes and prayers for his prosperity with which they crowded around him, while most of the women shed tears, Orlando spoke kindly to each of them, assured them that he should rejoice in any good that might befal them: But, added he, I hope, my kind friends, we do not part for a great length of time; and that on my return I shall find you all here, unless any of you lasses should be carried off by good husbands. Then, again wishing them all well, he mounted his horse; and Jacob following, he rode away from the Hall—but not with a design of going to the house of his father; he rather meant to linger about the woods till the hour when he thought there was a chance of his finding Monimia once more in the turret.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Orlando, already repenting, though he hardly knew why, that he had told the game-keeper so

much, was very unwilling to entrust him with more. He had not so exactly described the way of his communication with Monimia, as to enable any other person to find it: and he wished rather to recal than to increase the confidence he had placed in a man of whom he knew very little, and who might perhaps make an ill use of his confidence. A new difficulty therefore arose: he knew not what to do with Jacob and the horses, which he now repented that he had used. If he sent them on to his father's, it would be suspected by a family who were every hour looking out for him, that he had staid behind with Monimia: if he left them in the wood, the man would probably be discontented; and if he sent them to an alehouse near the mill at the extremity of the park, Pattenson (who was the great friend and patron of the man who kept it) or some of the other servants, might be there, whose inquiries could neither be satisfied nor evaded. Determined however as he was to open his heart to his father before his last adieu, he, after some deliberation, resolved to send them home; and he thought the inquiries his father would make, would give him a good opportunity to put an end (at least as far as he could) to a mystery of which he felt ashamed, as unworthy of himself, and of the object of his affection.—Thus resolved, he told the game-keeper he meant to return back to the Hall, in the hope of seeing Monimia for five minutes; and that he should go to West Wolverton with his horse and portmanteau, whither he would himself follow in about two hours, as he should tell his father, if he asked after him, on hearing or seeing the horses arrive without him.

The man obeyed; and Orlando, making a circuit through the woods, in order to return to the Hall by the least frequented way, and to have as

little of the open part of the park to cross as possible, arrived once more at the mansion which he had so lately quitted as for the last time.—He walked very slowly on purpose; and his thoughts were such as brought with them only dejection and sorrow.

He could not help recollecting with regret, those hours, now gone for ever, when, in his early youth, he traversed these paths—happy in the present, and thoughtless of the future;—when he had no passion to torment, no fears for its object to depress him; but went to Monimia with the same simple eagerness as any of his sisters or his other playfellows, and was unconscious that the rest of their lives would be imbittered with anxiety and disappointment—perhaps remorse.—Orlando already felt something like it: with the most candid and ingenuous temper he had lived some time in a course of deception—he had taught it to the innocent, unsuspecting Monimia, and had sullied the native candour and integrity of her character. The sophistry by which he had formerly prevailed upon her to consent to their clandestine meetings, now seemed mean and contemptible; but perhaps in thinking thus, Orlando was too much like other transgressors, who repent because they can sin no more.

He thought himself, however, firmly determined that, had he staid at the Hall, he would, at whatever hazard, act with more openness; but as he was now going from it, there could be no harm in this last adieu. In writing to Monimia there could be nothing wrong, especially as he meant not to make a secret of it to his father and Selina, nor indeed to any of his own family: while the peculiarities of Mrs. Rayland, and the watchful malignity of Mrs. Lennard, seemed fully to justify his

not revealing to them what would be so hazardous to Monimia and to himself.

Amid these disquieting and contradictory reflections, he at last reached the Hall. It was the darkest of December nights, but calm and still. Orlando walked slowly round the house, which, save a glimmering light from the window of Mrs. Lennard's room, bore no appearance of being inhabited. His longing eyes, which had anxiously watched for some consoling beam from the turret, whither they had so often been turned with transport, now sought for the propitious ray in vain. Still it was possible Monimia might be there, but, from her aunt's late suspicions, deprived of a light. As the house seemed perfectly quiet, he ventured up to the well known door, and, listening awhile, tapped at it; no answer was given!—he repeated the signal louder; still no delicious sounds were heard in return!—and convinced at length that his project had wholly failed, and Monimia was still a prisoner, he became half frantic, from the reflection that he had hazarded their secret in vain: he had in vain imagined a finesse, and asserted a falsehood, and perhaps must at last go without seeing her, his heart torn at once by his own sufferings and by the idea of hers.

In stepping back to return down the stairs, when after a long stay all hope had forsaken him, his foot struck something before him, which seemed to be a parcel: as not a ray of light entered the place where he was, he felt for this with his hands, and, at length finding it, he discovered it to be a small book: it was tied with a packthread; and Orlando immediately supposed, what was indeed the truth, that Monimia, not being permitted to return that evening to sleep in her former apartment, had, however, on some pretence or other entered

it, and deposited at the door that book, which contained a letter. He opened the book with trembling hands, and found what he expected by the seal; but to read it was impossible, where he had no means of procuring light; he therefore put it into his pocket as eagerly as if he was afraid somebody would take it from him, and then ran towards home; where, hardly feeling the ground as he went, he arrived, in a state of mind so uneasy and confused, that he no longer was capable of caution or reserve; but hastening into the kitchen, where he first perceived a light, he snatched up a candle without speaking, and was hurrying with it to his own room, when his father, who had been anxiously watching his arrival, opened the door through which he was preparing to pass up stairs; and seeing him pale and breathless, his eyes wild, and his hair dishevelled, he concluded that something very terrible had happened to his brother.—The rash, unthinking, and vehement character of Philip, his wild profusion, and unsettled principles, had of late so harassed the imagination of his father, that he now thought only of his committing suicide; and the sudden appearance of Orlando, in such an agitated state, struck him with the idea that this fatal event had happened—Almighty God! cried he, as he seized the arm of Orlando, who muttering something, would have passed to his room—Almighty God! what I have dreaded has happened. —Orlando, who thought at that moment only of Monimia, and was impatient at every interruption, was, however, so struck with this exclamation, and with the look of anguish that accompanied it, that he stopped, and, with terror equal to that with which he had been addressed, cried, What, my dear Sir! for Heaven's sake what has happened? My mother, my sisters! Oh your brother! inter-

rupted Mr. Somerive—tell me the worst at once, it cannot be more dreadful than my fears represent it.—Indeed, Sir, I know nothing of my brother; nothing has happened to him that I know of—I hope you have heard nothing.

No! cried Mr. Somerive, a little recovering from his apprehension. Speak low, Orlando; I would not for the world alarm your mother, who is in bed:—but your looks, your haste, your staying out, and your sudden appearance, gave me I know not what idea, that some dreadful accident had happened to poor Philip.

Dear Sir, replied Orlando, you will really destroy yourself, if you give way to such horrible apprehensions; Philip, I am persuaded, is well.—Pray compose yourself; I am extremely sorry I alarmed you, and beg you will make yourself easy.

Ah! Orlando, said Mr. Somerive as he sat down in the parlour, whither he desired his son to follow him—ah, Orlando! you relieve me from one misery only to plunge me into another, less insupportable indeed, but still more painful to me.—What is the meaning, my dear boy, of these haggard looks, of this disordered manner, of these late walks, and this breathless return? Some mystery hangs over your actions, which cannot but be injurious, since those actions, were they not such as your own conscience condemns, need not be concealed from your family—from your father!

They shall not, Sir, replied Orlando warmly—I will not leave you in doubt about my conduct; you will find nothing in it that need make you blush for your son: spare me but this one night, and to-morrow night there shall not be a wish of my heart concealed from you.

Alas, poor boy, said Mr. Somerive tenderly, I guess but too much of them already:—but, Orlando,

I depend upon your integrity; I have never known it deceive me. Go, therefore, now—and let me not see to-morrow that wild and unsettled look, that pale countenance, and so many symtoms of suffering, which I, my son, see but too plainly, and yet dare hardly say I pity, for fear I should encourage what I ought to condemn. Then, with a deep sigh, he added, Good night, dear Orlando! I will go and endeavour to compose myself, or at least conceal from your mother the uneasiness that devours me.—Ah, my child! many and many nights I do not close my eyes: the sad image of Philip, bringing ruin on himself, on my wife, and on my poor girls, haunts me eternally; and then, Orlando, when my expectation rests on you, when I think that I have another son who will protect and support them when I am gone—for I feel that I shall not live long—then the apprehension of some fatal entanglement that will ruin all our hopes, comes over my heavy heart; and I see nothing for my wife, and my dear girls, but poverty and despair.

Oh! this is too much, cried Orlando; I cannot indeed bear it—What shall I say—what shall I swear, to quiet these distracting apprehensions?—Good God, Sir! what have I ever done, what selfish actions have I ever been guilty of, which could lead my father to suppose that, to gratify myself, I would abandon my dear—my affectionate mother, or forget the interest of my sweet sisters?—Nay, Orlando, you never have given me reason for such a supposition; but let us talk of it no more—once more, good night! Orlando then kissed his father's hand, and left him. Eagerly he tore open the letter, which had already, from his excessive impatience, occasioned to him so much pain. It contained these few words:—

"My aunt refused to let me return to my former room this night, and you well know I dared not press it; I could obtain no more than permission to go thither for half an hour to put it to rights, as she has told me I shall go back to it to-morrow; and I use that opportunity to leave this letter, inclosed in a book, which I hope you will not miss. Orlando, if you go to-morrow; we shall meet no more!—But as you mention not setting out till Monday morning, I flatter myself that if that is so, you will not go without seeing me: at all events I will be in the great pond-wood between four and five to-morrow evening; and will wait on the old bench not far from the boat-house. I will not say what I shall suffer till you come, if indeed you do come: but be not uneasy for me, for my aunt will have no doubt of your being quite out of the country by to-morrow, and therefore will let me go out to walk without any questions. If you can come, I shall not expect to find an answer at my door.—If you cannot——But, indeed, Orlando, my trembling hand, and the tears that fall upon the paper, prevent my saying any more. I cannot write a farewell to you!—But if I never should see you again, do not forget me, Orlando!—And may God bless you, and make you happy!"

The paper was indeed blistered, and some of the words almost obliterated, by the tears that had mingled with the ink. Orlando kissed these marks of tender sensibility a thousand and a thousand times; he laid the precious paper to his heart, and believed the talisman abated its throbbing; then took it to read again, and endeavoured to calm his spirits with the assurance that he should meet the adored writer of it, and repeat an hundred times protestations of tenderness which he never felt more forcibly than now. But as soon as his disquieting

apprehensions about Monimia, and his fears of not seeing her, were appeased, the scene he had just passed through with his father recurred with more acute pain to his mind: he had promised to reveal the secret which was already suspected; but, though he firmly adhered to this resolution, surely his father would not insist upon his promise to give up all thoughts of Monimia—That he felt to be a promise which he could not make—his whole heart recoiled from it. Ah! why was it thus impossible to reconcile his duty and his love; and why should his attachment to Monimia be inconsistent with the attention his family would have a right to—if—if his father should die?—The very idea of his father's death was insupportable; and yet he was going from him, and could not watch his health, or contribute to his comfort. Thus wretched Orlando tried in vain to sleep—his blood throbbed tumultuously in his veins; his heart seemed too big for his bosom; by carrying his thoughts to the dreadful parting of the next day, he was rendered incapable of tasting any present repose; and day appeared before his troubled thoughts had so wearied his frame as to allow him to fall into unquiet slumber. Even in his short and disturbed sleep, tormenting visions assailed him—he saw the funeral of his father, who yet appeared living, or at least appearing to him, though dead—and pointing with one hand to his mother and his sisters, while with the other he waved him away from Monimia, who, at a distance, seemed to sit dejected and alone, in a wild and dreary scene, where birds of prey screamed around her—from which she endeavoured to escape towards Orlando, and held out her hands to him for help in vain. A repetition of these unformed horrors took away all inclination to sleep. At seven o'clock Orlando left his bed, more de-

jected than ever he felt before; and dreading the dialogue that must ensue, he joined his father, who was walking, melancholy and alone, in the garden.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Somerive received his son with tenderness; but his dejection was but too visible. Orlando approached him with apprehension, and his voice trembled as he spoke the salutation of the morning. They traversed a long gravel walk twice before either of them spoke again. At length Mr. Somerive asked Orlando, if he had seen his mother and sisters? He answered, that he believed they had not yet left their chambers; and another painful silence ensued, which neither of them seemed to have resolution to break.

At length Mr. Somerive said, This, Orlando, is the last day we shall pass together for some time —let it not be clouded by dissimulation on your part; it shall not be so with remonstrance on mine: but my advice you will hear, since indeed, my son, it is for your sake, not my own, I give it—I shall soon be out of the reach of all the evils of this world!

Do not talk so, dear Sir, exclaimed Orlando, seizing his father's hand; do not I beseech you! Such gloomy presentiments will overcloud this day with more pain for me, than your severest remonstrance. Pray think more cheerfully; you are yet but in the middle of life; you have a constitution naturally good; and you may yet many years see around you a family who idolize their father.

No, Orlando; cried Somerive, interrupting him,

it will not be. Your brother, on whom my first hopes were fixed, he has inflicted the wound which, from long irritation, is become incurable; and where—alas! where is this family so fondly beloved? Philip is gone! for I see that nothing can save him—My eldest daughter is married into another kingdom, where I can never see her—And you, Orlando, you are now going from me: I am not superstitious, but I feel something like an assurance that we part to-day for ever; or if I am so favoured by Providence as to embrace you again, will you be the same after having entered the world; will you bring back to me the excellent heart, the ingenuous temper, the integrity of principle that has hitherto made me glory in my son?

Orlando, who expected a very different opening to this conversation, warmly repeated his protestations, that nothing should make him forget the duty he owed his father—the affection he felt for his family. Ah, Sir! cried he, if you knew how little is to be apprehended from the world, where the whole heart is already absorbed in attachment, contracted in the early dawn of life, and interwoven with the very existence, you would not feel these fears, nor wound me with these doubts.

I have lived near fifty years, Orlando; you have not yet finished your twenty-first. I have seen, though passing in obscurity much of my time—I have seen young men set out in life uncorrupted, and apparently endowed with every noble principle that could render them honours to their country or their families; yet, in a few years, I have seen them, either hardened by ambition, or degraded by debauchery, not unfrequently combining both; and if they have interest, pursuing the one only as the means of indulging in the other.

It is very true, Sir, answered Orlando: but the

ambition of a soldier is surely glorious ambition; it leads to honour through hardship and danger; and he who follows his profession earnestly, can have little time for the sallies of irregularity.

You are to be a soldier of *peace*, Orlando; but I will do you justice, I do not believe you will disappoint my hopes by becoming a gamester or a libertine.

No, Sir! said Orlando vehemently. To be the first I have no inclination, and for the second you have a security which I am sure you will believe infallible—I promised you last night that I would open my whole heart to you; dare I now then solicit your patience while I acquit myself of what I hold to be an indispensable duty, and speak with that sincerity to you, which I have reproached myself for ever neglecting to observe, though indeed it was not always possible.

I attend, said Mr. Somerive in a grave and low voice: I would not, Orlando, touch upon this subject, because I wished to see if you had candour and resolution to speak when you might have evaded it.

Orlando, whose momentary courage already failed him, now half repented that he had said so much—now shrunk from the unworthy idea of concealing any thing. He began then in a low and tremulous tone; and while his heart throbbed with a thousand painful emotions, he related to his father the whole progress of his passion, even from his first recollection of the time when he began to love Monimia better than any of his sisters; when, in going to the Hall, he thought more of seeing her than of the amusements in which he was indulged, and often refused to ride out on a horse Mrs. Rayland allowed him occasionally to have when he was about eleven years old, or to go to play with the men in the park:

because, at the hours when these recreations were offered him, he had opportunities of sitting with Monimia, who was employed by her aunt to pick cowslips from their stalks, to collect rose leaves, or dry flowers and herbs in the housekeeper's room. He concealed nothing from his father that happened in the progress of his love; and as his timidity gradually vanished, he spoke of her with all the enthusiasm and all the tenderness of passion. His father sighed more deeply than he did as he proceeded in his story; when he ceased speaking, remained a moment silent; and then, with another long-drawn sigh, he said, I have always suspected something of this sort; but my conjectures were short of the truth. If I had known, Orlando, that the Hall contained so dangerous an inmate, not all the hopes that have been raised by Mrs. Rayland's partiality to you, should have induced me to have suffered your residence there.

Good God! Sir, exclaimed the young man, can you call an angel dangerous? Oh say rather that my Monimia will prove to me a guardian seraph? In thinking of her, I find my mind elevated, and purified—I live only for her—I wish only to live worthy of her.

Just now, Orlando, you talked of living only for your family—for your mother—for your sisters: and now this angel is the only object of your future life! An angel! every idle boy that reads ballads or writes them, every scribbler that sends his rhymes to a magazine, calls the nymph who inspires him an angel; and such an angel is this Monimia of yours! and from such sort of reading you have learned to fancy yourself in love with her. The niece of Lennard is the last person in the world whom I would wish you to elect, and ....

And why the niece of Lennard, Sir? said Orlan-

do somewhat impatiently—surely my father is too liberal to confound their merits. Poor Monimia! She is indeed the niece of Lennard; but, believe me, she does not in any instance resemble her—And what is her birth? does it render her less amiable, less lovely?

Oh, softly! cried Somerive, interrupting him in his turn, I have not the least doubt, Orlando, but that you could prove in a moment that this seraphic damsel is not only the most perfect of human beings, but the better for belonging to a woman who has always stood between me and the countenance of my relation; a woman, who, in all probability, will finally rob me of my birth-right. Unhappy ill-starred boy! Do you not see that, by this misplaced attachment, you have put it into the power of Mrs. Lennard to destroy all the hopes you have been cherishing? Do you not see that you have put yourself upon her mercy? that, under pretence of not knowing of this clandestine love, she has suffered it to go on? secure of being able to ruin you at any time with her lady by discovering it, and making a merit of her own disinterested conduct.

Orlando felt that there was too much truth in this observation; but the greater those hazards were that he incurred for Monimia, the dearer she became to him.

Well, Sir, said he, and if Mrs. Rayland's favour can be held only by the sacrifice of every honest affection, I will disclaim it. Why should she discard me for loving an amiable, beautiful girl, who—?

Nay, nay! cried his father impatiently—Why has she invincible pride, and obstinate prejudice? Why has she always held me at a distance, because my father, though her only relation, was the son of a man who could distinctly count no more than two

generations? Why has she always expressed her detestation of the memory of *my* mother, whom fortune reduced to be her companion? Why has she ever despised *your* mother, because she was the daughter of a man in trade? It is of no use to inveigh against, or investigate the cause of all these supercilious distinctions in the mind of our old cousin: we know that, unluckily for us, they exist: and we know they are invincible. How do you think a woman so haughty and arrogant would like to hear that the young man she has been distinguishing by her favour, and to whom there is some reason to think she may make up the injustice she has done his family, has engaged himself to marry one of her domestics; a girl brought up in her house through charity, the daughter of a nobleman's steward, and the niece of her housekeeper?

If such are her prejudices, Sir, exclaimed Orlando warmly, that I must make myself eternally wretched lest I should offend them, I had rather, much rather, give up for ever all those hopes, of which the reality would be too dearly purchased, if the best part of my life, and all that can render it valuable, is to be the price. I thank General Tracy more than ever for giving me a commission, which, little as it will afford me, and as weak as my hopes are of preferment, will at least render me in some degree independent.

I am obliged to General Tracy too, said Mr. Somerive, for you will now be taken out of the most perilous situation that it is possible for a young man of your temper and imagination to be in. If Lennard is satisfied with having got you out of the house (for I doubt not but it was she who so much accelerated your going), it will be well;—a little more knowledge of the world will cure you of this romantic passion. I hope you are not engaged to this girl?

Engaged, Sir!

Aye, Orlando—engaged?

If I give you no more trouble, Sir, said Orlando dejectedly, with what you are pleased to term my romantic passion, I must be forgiven if I answer no questions as to my future conduct; it shall not be such as shall disgrace my family, or give you any *reasonable* cause of uneasiness.

The emphasis laid on the word reasonable did not at all please Mr. Somerive—You must give me leave, Sir, said he rather sternly, to judge of the reasonableness of my feelings myself: you evade my question, after all your professions of sincerity. Good God! what a fate is mine! One of my sons is lost to me: the other is going to throw himself away, if not as unworthily, at least more irrecoverably:—your brother may be reclaimed by time and affection; but an unfortunate marriage, contracted so early in life, is certainly ruin.

This speech was ill calculated to appease the concern and impatience with which Orlando found that his father, generally so considerate and indulgent, suffered his dislike to Mrs. Lennard to stifle every generous and liberal sentiment of his heart; and he was on the point of answering with more warmth than he ever in his life ventured to use, when fortunately, to save him from repentance, which would instantly have followed if he had given his father greater pain, the General joined them, and, after a few common compliments, they were met, as they walked towards the house, by Mrs. Somerive with a summons to breakfast. Though the interposition of the General had a little relieved both, the inquiring eyes of Mrs. Somerive were not easily evaded or deceived: she saw, and trembled to see the emotions that shook the soul of her husband; while, on the expressive features of

Orlando, disquiet and anguish, mingled with something of disappointment and resentment, were too visibly to be traced by paternal solicitude. The presence of the General, however, and of the three girls, prevented her speaking of what so much affected her; by degrees the clouds upon her husband's brow seemed less heavy; but Orlando was pensive and silent: the attempts he evidently made to shake off his concern, were quite ineffectual; and as soon as his hasty breakfast was over, he took his hat, and, turning to his mother, inquired whether the dinner hour was as usual (for on Sundays the family were sometimes accustomed to dine earlier): she answered that it was; and Orlando, then slightly bowing to the rest, was leaving the room, when his father cried, I thought you were to pass this last day of your stay in the country with us, Orlando!—I shall be back to dinner, Sir, replied he as he shut the door.—Somerive, who, in the dread of his losing Mrs. Rayland's favour, and in his hatred to Mrs. Lennard, had spoken of Monimia with more asperity than he felt, was now convinced that harshness would have little influence on the warm impetuous spirit of his son; that he would have done better to have trusted to mildness and persuasion, and to have treated him in this instance, as he had hitherto always done, rather with the gentleness of a friend, than the authority of a parent.

Stung with regret, anguish, and disappointment, Orlando wandered away from the house, hardly knowing why, or whither he was going. Instead of obtaining for Monimia his father's protection, and the countenance of his family during his absence, with which he had fondly flattered himself, he had heard what almost amounted to a prohibition against thinking of her any more; and his own candour and sincerity, to which he had been taught so religiously

to adhere, had apparently done him more mischief than the hints which his brother had thrown out, who had (as he lately learned from Selina) never ceased attempting, during his last visit at home, to impress his father and mother with a notion, that Orlando had not only a correspondence, but a correspondence of the most criminal nature, with Mrs. Lennard's niece. Mrs. Somerive, always unwilling to see the faults of one son, or to hear of the supposed faults of another, had sometimes evaded, and appeared, when she was forced to hear it, quite indifferent to this information; while Somerive, whatever credit he might give to the existence of what he thought such a foolish and boyish inclination, discouraged this invidious disposition in his eldest son; and though he sometimes felt a good deal alarmed about Orlando, he thought so contemptibly of Mrs. Lennard, because he had learned early in life to despise and dislike her, that he could hardly imagine it possible for a relation of hers to make a lasting impression on a young man of so much taste and spirit. He was however often uneasy, and particularly after the dinner party at Stockton's, on this subject; but, upon inquiry, he could not find that Monimia was a girl likely long to captivate his son, or to engage him in a serious attachment. Some persons told him, indeed, that she was a pretty girl; others, that she was a handsome girl; but more, that there was not any thing very extraordinary in her: while from other quarters he heard that her aunt treated her like a common servant, except that she never sat in the kitchen or the servants' hall; and that she hardly ever was seen by any of the family, being employed in attending Mrs. Rayland only when she was sick, and at other times in waiting upon or working for Mrs. Lennard in her own room. Somerive therefore thought, that whatever

childish affection his son might have felt for her, could hardly have any serious termination, or any that could injure him with Mrs. Rayland; and if now and then, on remarking some peculiarity in Orlando's conduct or looks, he recollected Philip's wild assertions about this fair maid of the Hall, as he was accustomed in ridicule to call her, the hope that such childish love would be forgotten, and the idea he had taken up that Mrs. Lennard kept her niece quite out of Orlando's way, and treated her as a mere servant, quieted his alarms; for which indeed he had no remedy, for he could not either object to any person whom Mrs. Rayland chose should inhabit her house, or remove Orlando from it till the present period, when he had her consent and assistance.

But to whatever motives the conduct of Mr. Somerive was really owing, Orlando had seen it in that view only that was the most flattering to his sanguine hopes: they now appeared to be destroyed for ever, and he saw only despair before him. Far from being allowed to ask his mother's permission for Selina to see his Monimia, he dared not name her again, lest he should receive an injunction which the certainty of immediate death would not compel him to obey; and his projected confession that he was going in the evening to meet her for the last time, he now had not courage to make; yet he could not disguise it; for, since the General's residence in this family, their simplicity of living, and their hours, had been entirely changed; and instead of dining at three, as had been always their custom, they now called it four: but it was often, in compliance with the General's habits, near an hour later; five was the hour Monimia named in her note; it was perhaps the only one in which she had a chance of escaping. therefore, whatever might be the dis-

pleasure it occasioned to his father and his family, whatever might be their conjectures and remarks, he must either fail returning to dine with them, or break away perhaps before the removal of the tablecloth; to do the former would have been less uneasy to himself, but he feared it would be more offensive to his family. Resolutely determined to see Monimia at all events, he fixed upon the latter; but as he could bear no more of his father's displeasure than what he was sure (he thought) of hearing when he returned from his last dear interview, he could not resolve to go back to the house, but continued walking, almost mechanically, towards Rayland Hall, forgetting, in the extreme agitation of his spirits, how very material it was that he should not be seen after he had taken his last leave of Mrs. Rayland, and she believed him gone out of the country.

This never occurred to him till, under a hollow sand cliff that bounded one side of the great pond, near the mill, on the verge of the park, he suddenly heard the rattle of a carriage, and, looking behind him, saw Mrs. Rayland's coach stopping at the gate, within two hundred yards of him. He then recollected the contemptible figure he should make, and the irreparable injury it would do him with her, if he were detected in a falsehood, accompanied too with apparent ingratitude; but it was almost too late to escape, for on one side was the water, and on the other a high and almost perpendicular bank, that in some places hung over the road:—he had not, however, a moment's time to deliberate; but, seizing one of the roots that grew out of the sides, he sprang up, not without some hazard of pulling the crumbling loose soil, of which the bank was formed, upon him:—two steps brought him to the top, where, however, he would have been in a more

posed situation than below, if the holly, hazle, broom, and branches of pollard oaks that clothed the top of the eminence, had not afforded him a friendly concealment:—he threw himself among them; and then, perfectly sure that he could not be seen, he peeped among the withered leaves of the oak and the thicker green of the holly, and saw very distinctly the carriage approach, in which, with a palpitating heart, he perceived Monimia sitting backwards with her aunt, while Mrs. Rayland alone occupied the opposite seat. He then recollected, that this was the day on which Mrs. Rayland usually went in state to the church of a neighbouring parish; a ceremony that was performed four times a year, when the weather did not forbid it. He was amazed at his own thoughtless indiscretion; and saw that he owed his escape from its consequences to a mere accident. On these occasions a footman went behind, and Mr. Pattenson rode in great form by the coach side. It happened that the man behind the coach had been ordered by his lady, at the church door, to call with a message upon her tenant the miller, whom not being immediately able to find, he staid while he was inquired for; and Pattenson was under the necessity of dismounting to open the gate, which, as he was extremely unwieldy, and rode a spirited and well fed horse, was by no means the work of a moment. Orlando, after his apprehensions were at an end, found in this little incident something from which he drew a favourable omen; he was pleased to see that, in consequence of his supposed absence, Monimia was indulged with a greater degree of liberty, and appeared much in favour with Mrs. Rayland and her aunt: and it seemed as if destiny, however remotely, was determined to favour him; for, in this last, as well as in innumerable preceding instances,

he had trembled on the very brink of detectio and yet he had hitherto escaped; at least he ha reason to rest assured that Mrs. Rayland suspected nothing, and was far from imagining that her young kinsman was devotedly attached to her little, humble Mary.

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